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NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF

KHORASSAN

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THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF

KHORASSAN

AND ON THE

N.W. FRONTIER OF AFGHANISTAN

IN

1875

103087

BY

COLONEL C. M. MacGREGOR, C.S.I., C.I.E.

BENGAL STAFF CORPS

TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON:

WM H. ALLEN & CO., 13, WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

1879.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WOODFALL AND KINDER,
MILFORD LANE, STRAND, W.C.

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KHORASSAN.

CHAPTER I.

MUSHUDD TO SURRUKHS.

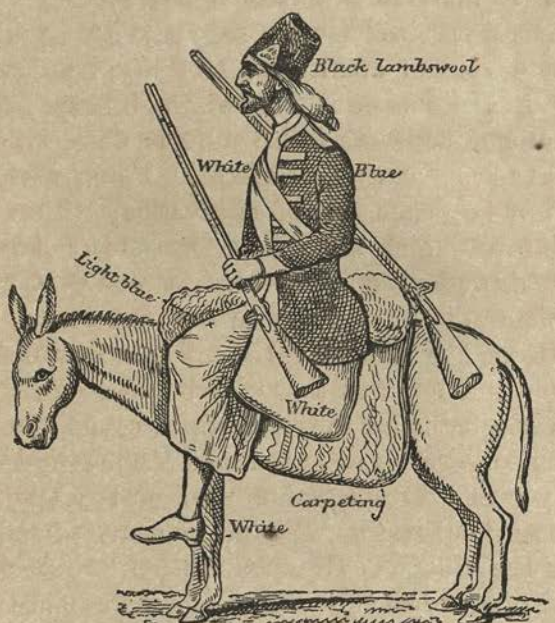
HAVING had about enough of Mushudd, I was anxious to be again moving, but was not yet quite disposed to turn homewards. Hearing, therefore, that the Persian garrison of Surrukhs was about to be relieved, I determined to accompany the relief, and see as much of the country in that direction as I could. The order from the Government of India prohibited my going into Afghanistan, or Toorkistan, but said nothing against my going anywhere in Persia I pleased, and as Surrukhs was a Persian garrison, I should be clearly within my instructions in visiting it.

The tract of country I proposed to visit afforded considerable interest, as, except Burnes, no Englishman had been over the whole of the road the relief proposed to march by. Mr. Taylor Thomson in 1840, had visited both Surrukhs and Merv, but he had reached the former place by way of Moozdur, while my road would take me by Ak Durbund and promised to clear up the topography of the country thence to Pool-y-Khatoon.

I left Mushudd about five in the morning of the

18th, and Abbass Khan rode out a short way with me. It was a beautiful clear morning, and the view of the surrounding hills was the best I had yet had, while the golden minars and dome of the tomb of the Imam stood out beautifully clear, as if entering a protest against any disappointment at a visit to Mushudd. On the road we passed the Urabb and Ujjum regiments, on their way to relieve guards in the city. The men, as usual with Persian regiments, were good material, making one's fingers itch to have the working them into shape; but the dirty state of their dress and accoutrements, and the slovenliness of their whole get-up, and their slouching gait, would have driven many gallant officers of H.M.'s Army I could name into a fit. On getting outside, we passed their camp, the most striking feature of which was that it seemed as if this regiment owned more donkeys than men; I mean this of course literally, for taken figuratively, it is of course no more than may be said of any corps in other parts of the world. But speaking literally the donkey is a very important part of a Persian regiment, as every man who can buy or steal one makes a point of having his jackass. In quarters he is very useful in performing little odd jobs for his owner, ranging from the lawful to the illegal. Often the wretched soldier is enabled to earn a little to eke out his invisible pay and scanty subsistence by lending his donkey to carry fruit or what not from the villages; and often also he becomes useful for the transport of his owner's plunder from some neighbouring village. It is on the line of march though, that he comes in most useful; for in addition to carrying all his owner's baggage, he also has to carry himself, together with many of his friends' rifles as well. A Persian regiment

on the march, therefore, does not present in the least the same aspect as one of a properly disciplined army. There never is any attempt at order, and once the command to march is given, each owner of a donkey mounts his animal and goes along at his own pace. Though this system has the disadvantage of being fatal to all discipline, there is no doubt that it enables



PERSIAN INFANTRY SOLDIER.

Persian regiments to get over in one day an extent of ground no troops could accomplish solely on foot.

The Persian infantry soldier is dressed in a badly made tunic of the European model, which I think a pity, as the ordinary Persian frock-coat is not only a more serviceable shape, but looks better; besides, all the men wear their own longer coats under their

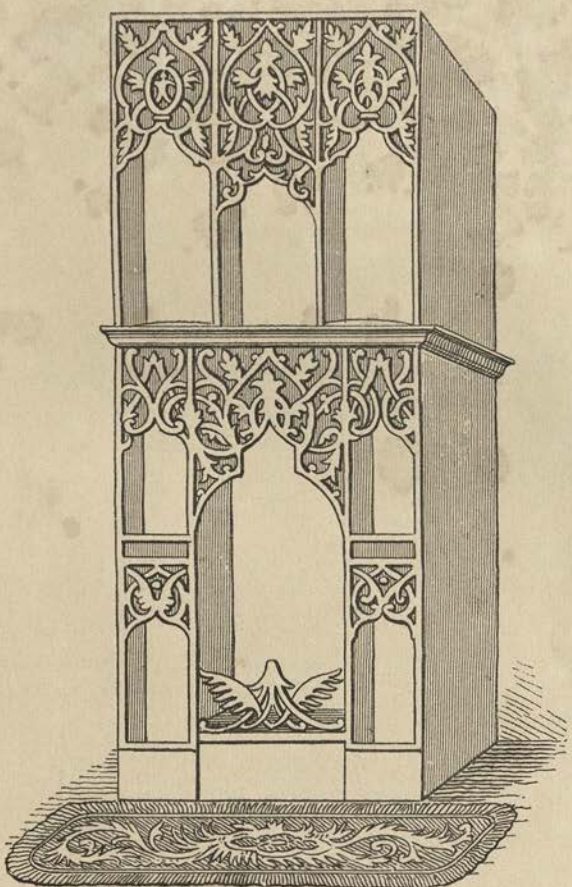
tunics. On his head he is supposed only to wear the black lambswool busby, with an ornament consisting of the "Lion and the sun" in brass; but as these head-dresses are extremely hot in the summer, the men generally tie some sort of a cloth on their heads and put the busby on over this.

Close to the Paeen Kheeaban Gate, we passed the ruins of a fine building called the Moosulla-y-Gow. This beyond its size has no great claims to admiration, for it is devoid of architectural beauty, but the front of the "Evan" has on it some of the best specimens of the enamelled tile-work called "Kashee."

The road on leaving Mushudd goes perfectly level through a large amount of cultivation, with villages far and near, which speak well for the fertility of the soil of this valley, and show that it would bear a far larger population than it can boast at present.

At about five miles out the village of Ashkabad is passed on the left and that of Kheeaban on the right, and half a mile further the river, which comes down from Torokh, is crossed by an easy ford. Passing on through Jullalabad and Dushtgurdoo, still over a level plain covered with cultivation, we came in about six and a half miles to the village of Hooseinabad, prettily situated on the slope of a brown stony ridge, and in the midst of fine plantations of poplar and extensive vineyards.

On arrival I found that my man had secured a delicious place in a cool garden, and I at once indulged in the luxury of a bath. The water was deliciously cool, and I lay down full length in the little aqueduct, and let it pour from a little fall over my head. This daily tubbing seems to be one of those things which no one in these parts is expected to understand, and is consequently put down as another proof of the madness



II. EVAN, NEAR MUSHUDD. [*To face page* 4.

with which all Furrungees are afflicted. After an hour or two, when owing to the soothing effects of the bath, breakfast, the cool air, and the cold sound of the running water, I was in the frame of mind that a child might have played with me, Abbass Khan, the Governor-elect of Surrukhs, who was in command of the party, came to see me. I at once rushed to put on a coat, but he came up and in a very jolly way said, "Come now, none of that; we 're our own masters here, so let the ways of cities be hanged, and let us be comfortable." This man, who is now about sixty, has seen a good deal of hard knocks in his life; he was in both the sieges of Herat, in 1837 and 1857, and has been in hundreds of skirmishes with Toorkmuns. He is a Hurat Sheea, but has been living in Persia for the last thirty years. He has not a very favourable opinion of the Afghans, and he became quite solemn when he said "Sahib, they are not to be trusted, not one of them, they are all crooked (Kuj)." Of course he talked about the Russians, every one does that in Khorassan, and the remark—when are the Russians going to take Merv or Herat? is nearly as common as the usual inane commencement of the conversation at a morning call in England, about the weather. He said one thing original, and though perhaps it was meant to flatter, it is none the less true. He inquired if the Russians were very great Roostums in fight; and then went on: "Every one says they are, but I confess I do not see why. The fact of their having overrun Toorkistan, certainly does not prove it, for the Oozbucks never fought properly once." I said I thought the Russians would always succeed in beating such enemies as Oozbucks and Toorkmuns, but if they tried on their little game with us, Inshalla! we'd lick their heads off.

Next day, as the force was not going to march, and the inaction was hateful, I determined to make a trip over to the north side of the valley and encamp at the large village of Kenibeest. This place, which is situated not above two miles from the foot of the low hills to the north, has about 300 houses, under a chief whose acquaintance I afterwards made, named Mahamad Khan. The chief's family and many of the inhabitants appear to be of Koordish origin, having come from Ardelan in the time of Shah Abbas. Among the others are found some Afsharts, which was Nadir Shah's tribe. The son of the headman, Ata Khan, was a fine young man of about twenty, who had already got a name as a destroyer of Toorkmuns, and he showed me a prisoner whom he had captured, with his horse, a few days before. About three miles from this place, on a small isolated hill are the ruins of an old stone fort called Shadshuhr attributed to the time of Daghianus. I did not go to see it, as I really cannot work up sufficient interest in ruins, unless there remains still in them some architectural beauty, or grandness of design, or site. In the hills beyond are marble quarries, but they say they are not very plentiful, nor, from the specimens I saw, very good.

Three or four miles to the west is another village called Kenigosha, which, however, I did not visit. It contains some 250 houses, inhabited by the descendants of a colony of Jumsheedees, whose chief now is a fine handsome fellow called Alayar Khan. I afterwards met this chief on the march to Surrukhs, where he was in command of his quota of horse. He talked much of Captain Napier, for whom he seemed to have a personal regard, and whom he remembered with affection. The

system of transplanting turbulent races from one part of the country to another, in order to keep in check some equally obstreperous tribe, does not seem a bad one, and might I think be often applied with advantage on our own frontiers in India. The hardship of it only applies to the first of these forced emigrants, and they probably often deserve no consideration. In Persia, the system is nearly always marred by the tyranny of the local governor, and the consequence is, these men are often not so faithful or so useful as they might be if well treated.

On this day's short march a considerable river is crossed by a deep ford, namely, the main stream of the Ab-y-Mushudd, called also in this part the Kara Soo. One mile down the valley, on the right bank of this river, is the considerable village of Kala Aulang, and on the left, that of Arsabad. About two miles beyond Kenibeest a low range of hills rises, beyond which is the district and village of Tabatkoon, whence there is a road by the Duhna Zao Koonee to Kullat-y-Nadan. There is also another road by the Duhna Munasar to Indulabad, whence these hills are named Koh Indulabad. The village of Kenibeest is a strong little place, surrounded by a respectable wall and a ditch, with its water supply safe, and not commanded. In the evening I visited the fort, which was in a filthy state, and had a long interesting conversation with Ata Khan, in which tales of Toorkmun raids figured most. These people are evidently not a bit afraid of the Toorkmuns, and give them as good as they get.

On the 20th July I left Kenibeest, about six in the morning, the road leading out in a direction a little south of west, over the dreary undulating waste, which lies between the hills on the left and the Mushudd

river on the right. The road went through no cultivation after leaving that of Kenibeest, but skirted for a time the Karez which provided that place with water. Numerous villages and hamlets are, however, passed near the river, among which may be mentioned Kozgoon, with 150 houses; a small walled village called Alee Maidanee, inhabited by Taemoorees; and Chillagai with fifty houses of Mushuddees. At four and a half miles from Kenibeest we crossed the road to the village of Mai-o-mai, which is about fourteen miles distant. It is situated under the hills in the road which goes by Moozderan direct to Surrukhs. Crossing numerous karez, in three miles further we came to another track leading to Mai-o-mai from Sungbust, and passed one mile on our right the village of Kara Bukken with 100 houses of Moozduranees.

The road now leaves the low ridge on the left, and going over some undulations, descends to the river through a narrow defile between low hills. This pass is practically the limit of the cultivation of the Mushudd valley, for though there is a little beyond, it is of the most precarious kind, the villagers carrying it on in constant fear from Toorkmun raiders. Yet under a strong government, the whole valley of this river, right down to Ak-Durbund, is capable of being kept in the highest state of cultivation, as there is abundance of water in the river, whose banks are not too high to admit of its being distributed for vegetation. The road now goes along the bed of the river, which is covered with a dense jungle of tamarisk and reeds, and at one and a half miles passes the old fort of Nazareean, where there are still a few miserable inhabitants. It then crosses the river, which is here only two and a half feet deep and thirty feet broad, and which trends

away to the left, and ascends the right bank to a ruined fort, and then going over a strong undulation descends again into the bed of the river at Lungurruh or Inayutabad.

The valley here is about two miles broad and has abundance of water, and a fine stretch of good soil capable of being cultivated. There is no village where we encamped; but fuel, forage, and water are abundant.

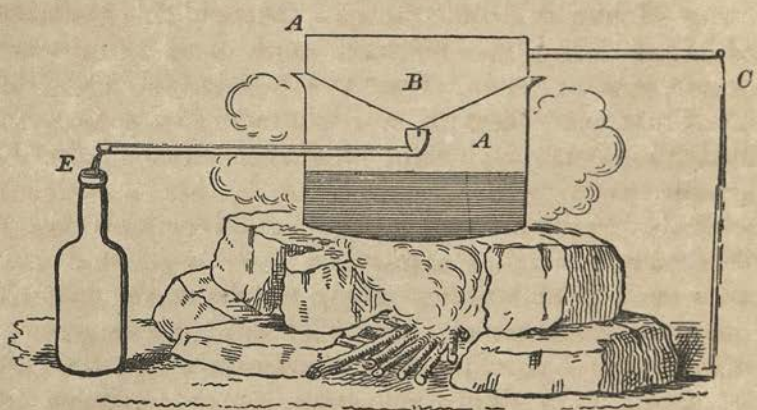
The sun was very hot when I arrived, and after roaming about for some little time among a disordered mass of human beings and baggage animals scattered about at their will, I observed some one making signs to me, and on getting closer was glad to find it was the old Surteep, Abbass Khan, who wished me to come under his tent for shelter; an offer I was delighted to accept.

Entering the low tent, I found the old soldier seated on his bedding, which was spread on the floor. Though a bit of a swell in his way, and going to take up the appointment of Governor of Surrukhs, I think his equipment might almost have passed muster even under the 40lb rule, and it certainly would have brought to shame any one accustomed to luxurious Indian compaigning. In the first place, the tent was so thin and light that it afforded but little protection from the sun; and beyond the old Surteep's bedding and a carpet there was absolutely nothing else. We sat there for some time, talking and eating fine water lemons the old gentleman had brought, waiting till my baggage came up.

Unfortunately this was not for a long time, as I had been persuaded at Mushudd that camels would be the best carriage to take for the desert road we were to go, so that I had to wait hours before these beasts, the

most provoking means of carriage one can have, came up. Of course I found that the stories of the difficulty of getting water on the road were ridiculously exaggerated, as no part was one fourth so bad as the deserts which I had crossed between Beeabunnuck and Tubbus, or Birjund and Herat.

The old Surteep was much interested when I informed him that I could make sweet drinkable waters out of the worst and most salt stuff he could give me, and he begged me to show him how it was done. I accord-



ingly one day told Pascal to bring the things over to his tent. My apparatus was a very simple one, which I had used for photographic purposes, and consisted of a common cooking-pot with a concave lid B. The pot I placed in a "choola," or fireplace formed of a few stones, and lit the fire underneath. In A is placed the boiling water, and in B a constant supply of cold water is poured, which, from its surplus running out by the pipe C, is always maintained cold, the steam from

the water in A then condenses in the lid B, and runs down and collects in a tin pipe, by which it runs out into the bottle E. In this way, with a small portable apparatus, sufficient drinkable water for one's own use can always be obtained, whatever the bitterness of the water supply may be. Abbass Khan was delighted with it, and begged me to have one made for him at Mushudd, but as I should probably not want my own again, and there would have been difficulty in forwarding one to him from Mushudd, I gave him my own, a gift which was very much appreciated.

At Mushudd I had managed, through the kindness of Abbass Khan, the British Agent, to get a new set of servants. One of these was one Kasim, who had been his own factotum, and as I had taken a fancy to him, he had let him come with me. He was a small active, very intelligent man, and had been very civil while we were at Mushudd; but I very soon found that he was not only unsuited to roughing it, but also very much averse to it. He seemed to have left his good qualities behind him, and instantly began to develop bad ones. So that the upshot was, I let him go back from the next march. My experience of Persian servants hitherto had been most unfortunate, but I was not much surprised, as I knew in this respect Persia did not differ from other countries. It is really impossible for a passer by to get good servants in any country; in India they are better than any place I know.

Next morning we started at 4.30 in the direction of SSE., the road going down the valley, but occasionally leaving it to go over low undulating spurs on the right bank. At two miles we passed a small fort called Kilichibad, which contained some thirty houses of Taemoo-

rees, and had a fair bit of cultivation round. Then we went on for one mile to Shadeecheh, another fort with some twenty houses of Mervees. Here the valley was about one and a half miles broad, with a fine stream of water in the river, and great abundance of fodder and fuel, together with a large extent of culturable land, only scraps of which were however made use of.

I was quietly riding in from this place, when a trooper came up to me, with the Surteep's compliments, to ask me to halt here, as he found that the guns would not be able to get beyond this to-day, and he did not think it safe to go on without them. So, as there was no help for it, I set to work to look out for a spot for my tent.

At nearly every other place before this march at which I had stopped, I had always been provided with quarters in the villages, but now I was obliged to have recourse to my tent. And small though it was, right glad was I to have such a luxury with me. Although only what is called in India a sleeping pal, I found it was the largest shelter in camp. It measured 8 by 10 feet, and was about 6 feet in height, and had two flys. The sun was extremely hot, the heat going up as high as 110° to 115° in the tent, and so in order to provide more shelter I had to place all my spare horse blankets between the flys. With this arrangement, these small tents are as much as a soldier requires for protection in the East. Comfort is of course out of the question, but then there can be no comfort where the thermometer adopts such tendencies. No doubt a larger tent seems a little cooler, but I doubt if it really is so, and after the thermometer has got to 110°, it really does not matter how much higher it goes.

We were, alas, doomed to stay in this uninviting spot

for yet another day to wait for the gunners, who seemed in no hurry to go to their prison at Surrukhs; but as I could not go on by myself, there was nothing for it but to grin and bear the disappointment.

Next morning, the 23rd July, I went over to see Mahamad Khan, the chief of the village of Kenibeest, who was here in command of the cavalry of the force. He was a nice gentle-mannered old man, but rather more fit for his own divan than for roughing it out here. Nevertheless, he had been a man of note in his day, and was much looked up to by the other leaders of horse.

After a short conversation we went round—I was going to say the lines—but this word would never apply to the manner of encamping peculiar to his men. The fact was each man had picketted his horse, however and wherever he pleased, and so we could only meander about, zigzagging from one to another, as Mahamad Khan wished me to look at some particular horse or take notice of some pet trooper.

I must say the cavalry thus brought to my notice were indeed "irregular," for at first sight each man seemed to dress as he liked, arm as he liked, and do as he liked; they were in truth, a body to make a cavalry officer of the Cardigan days (now gone for ever, I hope) shudder. But I had been accustomed thus to see the raw material presented in all its immaturity, and it was not long before I discovered in these incoherent atoms a system, not a system laid down in red books and published by order, but one founded on time-honoured custom and the practice of many hard, yet unheard of little campaigns. True, the men were dressed in "black or green, or blue or brown;" true, some had 14-hand ponies, others 16-hand Toorkmuns, and these were picketted anywhere and nowhere; true, they had no

beautifully dressed lines of cumbrous tents, and they had none of the paraphernalia termed "necessaries" in our land—yet they were a serviceable lot. And there was a good deal more uniformity about them than was apparent at first. They had all good serviceable sheepskin busbies, some black, some brown, white or grey, and nearly all had the sensible movable peak called the "aftab gardan," literally meaning "moving with the sun," as they are moved round in any direction so as to afford shade where the sun beats fiercest.

Their coats were the long Persian frock coat, which is one of the most serviceable and most gentlemanly coats I have seen in any land—and their boots were generally of good strong brown untanned leather, reaching to the swell of the calf (only calves in this country don't swell). These had pointed toes and high heels, very much like those in which the fair sex in Europe delight. They had no spurs, but carried a short Toorkmun whip, which last is, I think, a decided mistake.

Their arms generally consisted of a matchlock, slung as I have shown it in the sketch,* and a sword. Their weapon, par excellence, is the matchlock, which most Persians are very skilful in the use of on the move; their tactics being of the Parthian order, they use their matchlocks often at full gallop, firing either as they advance or retreat. To disciplined cavalry of course this sort of thing is more amusing than serious; but I daresay it would try the nerves of Cossacks, who in the Khivan campaign, were acknowledged even by the Russians, to be inferior as light cavalry to the Toorkmuns.

Their sabres are of the usual Khorassanee curved shape, with no protection for the hand; but they do not go in much for the use of the sword.

* Given at p. 237, Vol. I.

Their belts were all made of brown untanned leather, and though of rough construction were very serviceable. The sword-belt struck me as being of a useful pattern. It is a belt fastened by a snake hook, and one from which I think we might well take a hint. It is made of one piece of leather, which is slipped over the head and brought round the waist, and then tightened by means of a large ring to the necessary length, so as to fit over the right hip and under the left; the ends of the strap become narrower towards the end, and are then crossed through the ring which keeps all in its place. There are no buckles, and the only sewing is at the small rings of the sword. I wore one of these belts for a long time and found them most comfortable.

Another article of equipment well worthy of adoption, especially for pistol ammunition, is one I have since adopted in my own fighting equipment. It merely consists in having a number of little pouches or pockets sewn on to the cross-belt which sustains one's binoculars, as is shown in the sketch.* I have worn this now in riding for not less than some 3,000 miles, and always found it very convenient. The belt, too, with the pistol cartridges so carried, might be made to assume a very pretty appearance, suitable alike to the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

As to the horse equipment, first comes the head-stall, called "Kullugee." This consists of narrow brown leather, which looks weaker than it really is, as it is sewn double throughout; the usual price is four krans. The bit used is a jagged snaffle. In hot weather, or when flies are troublesome, they use a "maghazpara," which is tied on with a bit of string.

* See remark at foot of p. 14.

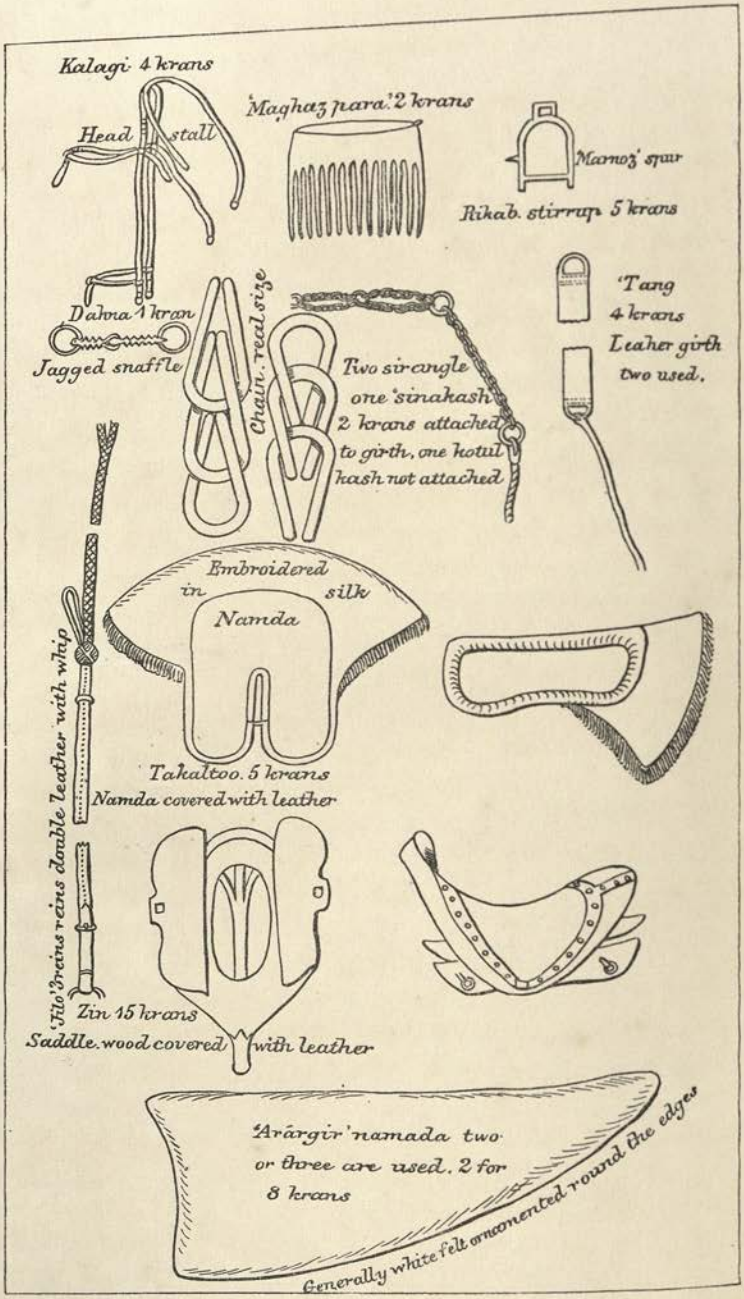
Attached to the head-stall is a chain, the actual size of the links of which is shown in the sketch. This is passed once round the horse's nose, and then through a ring and hangs down at the near side of the neck, and is attached to a beautiful light but strong picketing rope, made either of camel hair or silk. At the end of this rope is an iron picketing peg, which is always used by these horsemen.

As they shave the manes off their horses they always have a band, sometimes made of leather or rope, but often of leather with silver plates on it to hang round the swell of the neck, in order to give something for the horsemen to hold on by in mounting. The breastplate is made of the same material and is attached to rings in the front of the saddle.

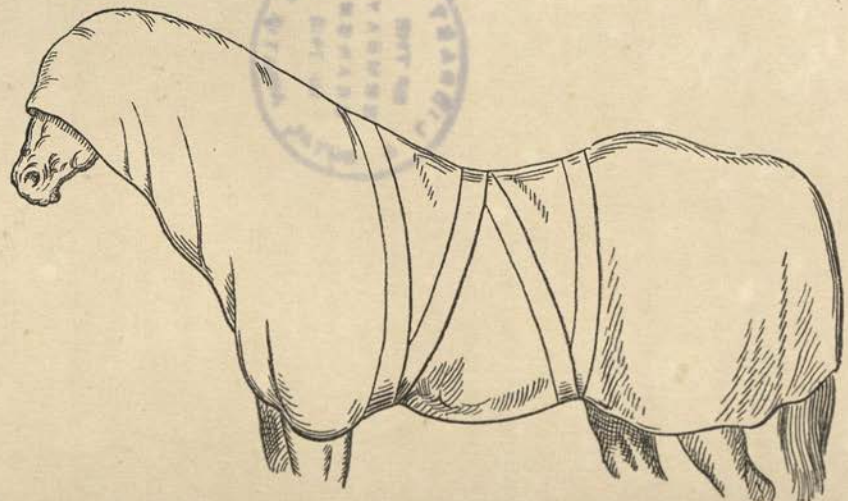
The saddle is of a shape that would not suit us, but it is a very strong serviceable article, with the seat of leather stretched as in our hussar saddles; the plan of which was, I believe, introduced by Nolan from the Hungarian saddles, and as these people came from Central Asia, it is very probable their saddles were very much what is in use with the Toorkmuns to this day. This saddle consists of two parts quite separate, viz., the "zin" or saddle tree, and the "tukultoo" or saddle pad. This last is made of thick folds of numda covered with leather, and having a sort of flap at the back which is made of cloth often beautifully embroidered in silk. Besides there is a white felt numda called "arasgir."

In saddling up their horses they first take off the huge Toorkmun felt "jhool" and roll it up in a long roll, its eventual place being behind the saddle They then fold the smaller "jhool."

But it was in their horse furniture that they excelled


Kalagi 4 krans
Head stall
'Maghaz para' 2 krans
Maroz' spur
Rikab. stirrup 5 krans
'Tang 4 krans
Leather girth two used.
Dalwa 1 kran
Jagged snaffle
Chain. real size
Two sir-cangle one 'sinakash' 2 krans attached to girth, one kotul kash not attached
Embroidered in silk
Namda
Takaltoo. 5 krans
Namda covered with leather
'Filo' 3 reins reins double leather with whip
Zin 15 krans
Saddle. wood covered with leather
'Arargir' namada two or three are used. 2 for 8 krans
Generally white felt ornamented round the edges

II. TOORKMUN HORSE FURNITURE. [To face page 16.



II. PERSIAN CAVALRY HORSE WHEN PICKETED. [*To face page* 17.

most, all being taken from the patterns in use with the Toorkmuns. The former sketch will show how these were placed on the horse, and the following description will demonstrate each article more in detail.

They first place it smoothly on the horse, then cross the sides over the back, and double back the two front pieces. On this they place the "arasgir," and then the "tukultoo," and fasten them with a broad leather (tung) strap. Over this again the saddle is placed, and also secured by another similar but broader strap. The tree is always taken off when the march is over, the saddle pad is often left on, and the smaller jhool is never taken off, but is unfolded and then the larger jhool is fastened on by a long girth which is wound round and round the body, so that the horse presents a rather comical, if comfortable, appearance.

The stirrup is shaped very much like ours, but to the inner edge there is a small spike (mamoz) which answers the purpose of our spur indifferently. These men never ride with more than one rein (jilo), and this is made, as is shown in the sketch, with a loop at the end, and often a long thong which can be used as a whip. To my mind these reins are far more sensible and serviceable than ours, as they enable the horseman to drop his rein when necessary and use his left hand, and also to pick it up with the greatest ease afterwards.

In heavy marching order every man has a pair of "Khoorzeens" or saddlebags of carpeting, which are stuck behind the saddle where it is well balanced. Over this is tied a roll, consisting of an overcoat or extra blanket, and behind all the roll composed of the larger felt for the horse. This roll is the only thing that does not look workmanlike, but owing to the

thickness and stiffness of the felt it is not possible to make it up smaller or more compactly.

Equipped in this way these men are enabled to make the longest marches and remain out without any more carriage, for in their Khoorzeens they carry their all, inclusive of provisions.

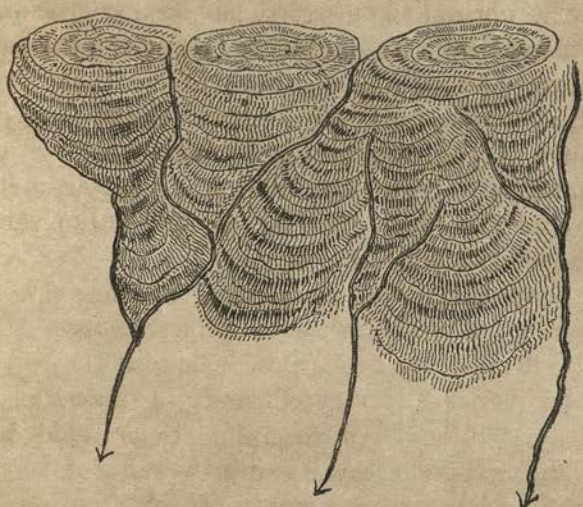
I was altogether much pleased with my little inspection of Mahamad Khan's cavalry, and told him, on leaving, that I had seen a good deal of cavalry in many parts of the world, and though I had seen smarter men, I had seldom beheld a more thoroughly serviceable turn-out. Such men led by English officers would prove very formidable antagonists for the best of Cossacks, and, let me add, the remark cuts the other way too. Our native cavalry in India, the best light cavalry in the world, would ride them down perhaps, but they would not have it quite their own way.

Though these irregular horsemen are capable of being made good cavalry if they were subjected to a strict discipline, it must not be supposed that as they are at present, they are really very efficient. I noticed many, very many, "lâches" of discipline that would have driven officers of our cavalry into a state of lunacy. There was seldom any attempt made at scouting, and the only endeavour to guard the front of our camp from surprise, consisted in pushing out a few bodies of men to the front, who generally went to sleep directly they arrived at their posts.

One of the most amusing instances of what we should term unsoldierlike behaviour I noticed, was seeing some of our advance guard riding in front with their wives behind them. I rode up to one of these men and asked him if he thought this was a right proceeding, and how he could fight while encumbered by his

better half. "Oh," he said, "it's all right, we shall not have any fighting, and if we do, she will soon jump off." I suppose he would not have had the smallest hesitation in getting rid of the extra weight if his own life was in danger; but there is something touching, I think, in the devotion of these women in thus following their lords, even into the lion's mouth.

From Shadeecheh, which we left on the morning of



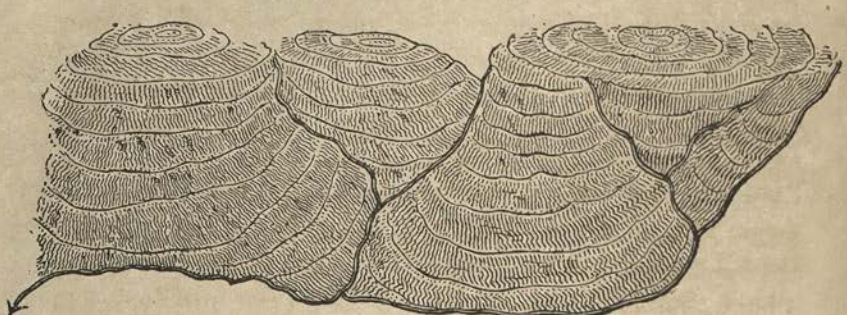
CONTOURS OF GROUND.

the 23rd., the road first crosses the river and then turns north, going for two miles over an undulating ridge on the left bank of, and parallel with, the river, which here gives a turn to the north. It then descends into a valley which drains into the main stream, and goes up it for two miles. Another ridge is crossed in the next mile, and the road then descends into a ravine and, going down it for one mile, comes again to the main stream of the Ab-y-Mushudd. Crossing this by a shallowish

ford, with heavy mud bottom, it continues along the right bank of the river for two miles to Char Goombuz, a ruined "serai" and "howz." Thence it continues by an excellent track, down the river bank, the valley of which is here one mile broad, for eight miles further to Ordoogah, passing at four miles another ruined serai called Nabat-y-Mai.

While going down this valley, I noticed a formation in the ground I have never seen or heard of before. I have always noticed the drainage of a ridge to run out more or less at right angles to the axis of the ridge; as is shown in the preceding diagram.

But here it was quite different, the drainage ran as above, only to the foot of the lowest contour of the ridge, and then turned sharp round and followed that contour, thus forming a ditch at the foot of the ridge, which cut off the hill from the level ground at its foot. This I have attempted to explain by the annexed sketch:



CONTOURS OF GROUND.

I cannot account for this freak, as the ground at the foot of the slope did not offer any obstruction that would have caused the drainage to turn off thus,

parallel to the axis of the ridge, and therefore I leave it for solution by others more learned in these matters.

As the "Surteep" had talked with rather a long face of the danger of to-day's march, I was rather amused by the utter confusion of the whole order of march. Cavalry were mixed up inextricably with a mass of camels carrying supplies and huge "Kajawalis" * containing the richer portion of the fair sex going to brighten the dreary existence of their lords at Surrukhs. The Infantry were mostly riding on donkeys, and wandered at the sweet will of the animals all over the country, and the guns were surrounded by such a throng of donkeys, horses, and camels, as would have made their services utterly inoperative in the event of an attack.

There was, however, more semblance of discipline among the gunners than the other arms; though thus surrounded, they were all marching in some order well together. The guns were 9-pounders drawn by six excellent little horses apiece, and though there was a good deal of rope in the harness, all looked fairly serviceable. The men were simply splendid in physique, and had all the attributes the raw material should possess. The way they get their guns over places that would have made many a more civilized gunner stare was most remarkable. Nothing seemed to come amiss to them and they shied at nothing. I experienced proud satisfaction in thinking that this superiority of the artillery of the Persian Army was a remnant of the wholesome system and pride in their craft, instilled into them in the days of the gallant Christie. The captain (Sooltan) in command, with whom I rode part of the way, said his father often spoke of Christie Sahib and

* A sort of pannier, one on each side of a camel, for the conveyance of women.

his glorious death at Aslandooz, and he added sadly, yet proudly, "Aye, with leaders like him we'd do it again." And I believed him, for dirty and unkempt as his men were, they bore on their fine manly bronzed countenances the mark which stamps men, "fit to go anywhere and do anything."

At Ordoogah there are no habitations, but the river bed affords any amount of fodder and fuel and water, and in the hills around them is excellent grazing for camels.

From this place there is a fine view of Moozduran, and the range of the same name which stretches from a bearing of 336° to one of 97°. It is apparently, and I believe actually, quite inaccessible between these points almost for footmen, except at Moozduran itself, which bears 47°, when the ridge becoming a very little more rounded and less precipitous affords room for two or three paths over it. But these, as well as every crest and hollow of the ridge, are defended and blocked by high circular towers. I counted no less than twenty-one of these towers, besides a small fort on the crest of an isolated hill. Altogether it is a very strong position, and must be considered as quite impregnable to the Toorkmuns. If it once fell into their hands, the result would be disastrous for the Persians, as then these jackals would have an impregnable fort as a base, from which to issue and harry the country right up to Mushudd. The Persians however are well aware of this, and keep a pretty strong garrison of irregulars in it.

The camp to-day was a little more closed up than it had been before, and Cavalry were sent down the river bed to beat the dense tamarisk jungle for lurking Toorkmuns, while picquets were pushed forward to the east. I did not feel the heat so much to-day, as, though

I had as usual to wait an unconscionable time for my camels, I found a friendly tamarisk of considerable size under which to spread my blanket.

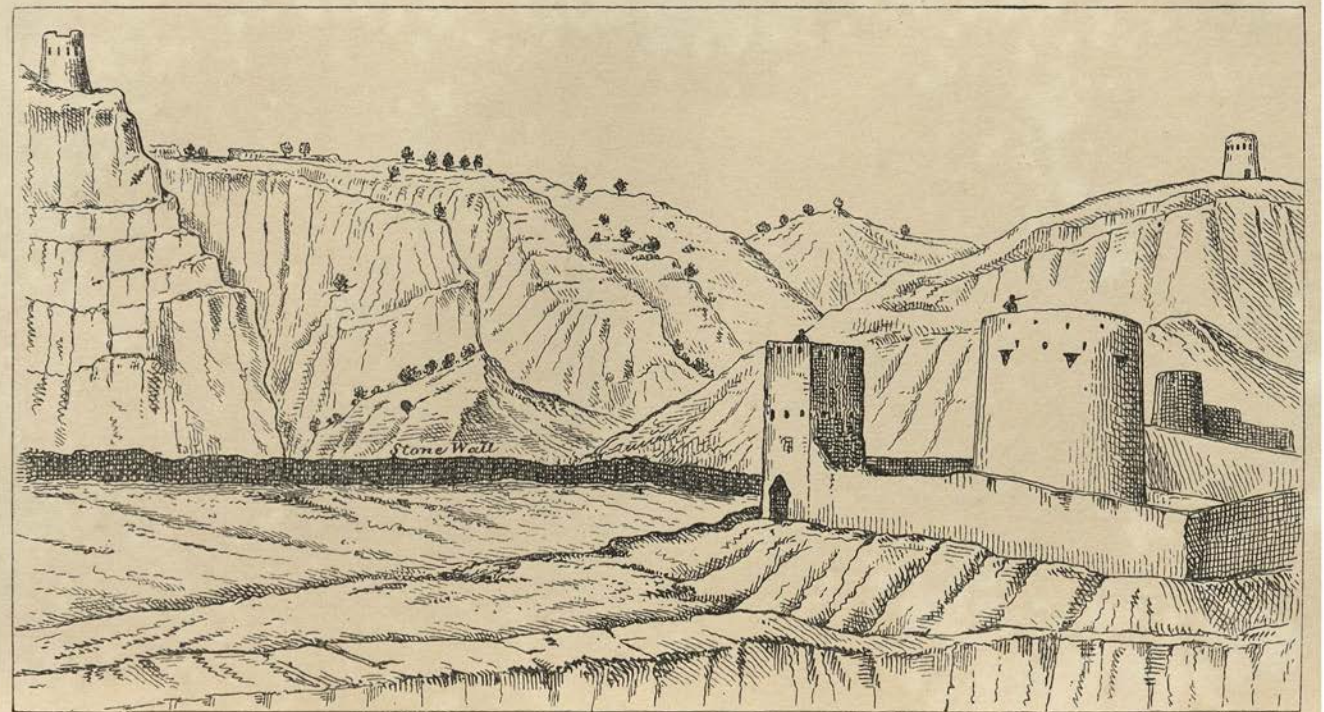
I always carried on my horse a couple of blankets, in one of which was a pair of light loose trousers made of tussa silk, and in the other a pair of slippers. Then in my saddle-bags I carried some food, so that I was quite independent, and could either have a snooze with my incomparable Terai hat as a pillow, write up my journal, or sketch in my map. Talking of the Terai hat reminds me that it, and a pair of clouded glass spectacles, were given me by kind friends just before I left India. Never have I had such useful and appropriate presents, and I am sure if the blessings I used to pour on the donors almost every day in this journey will do them any good, they ought to find their reward some day.

On Saturday the 24th July, we marched 16 miles to Ak Durbund. The road leads down the valley almost the whole way, only occasionally leaving it to go over spurs to the left, which here and there impinge on the river. It is quite practicable everywhere for field artillery. At the eighth mile we passed a newly built fort called Bughbughoo, occupied by about thirty wretched creatures, who looked at us passing with the longing look of prisoners afforded a glimpse of the outer world.

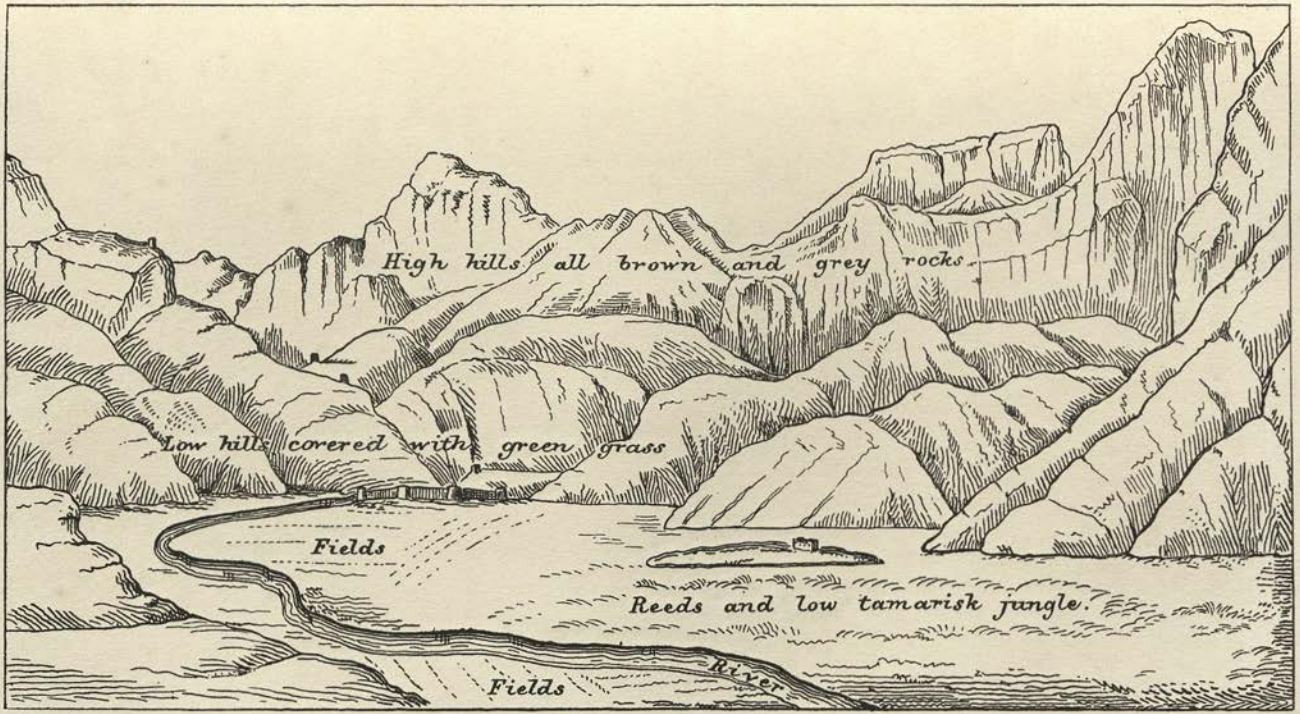
At the fourteenth mile we descended to the bed of the river and crossed to the right bank, by a very nasty, because very muddy, ford. Thence the road went over an open plain for one mile, when it ascended over a spur by a steep, but otherwise easy, pass, to another little opening, which was again divided from Ak Durbund by another similar pass.

The river here is confined between hills, so that the valley is not more than 300 yards across, and beyond this it gradually gets narrower and narrower, till it becomes a regular defile, and continues thus till it emerges from the hills at Pool-y-Khatoon, where the ground becomes much more open. All access from the east is closed by towers placed on commanding positions overhanging the defile, so that the position of Ak Durbund becomes one of very considerable importance in considering the defence of this border, as by it is the only practicable road between Moozduran and the southern side of the ridges which bound the Ab-y-Mushudd on the south.

From Moozduran the main ridge continues to be equally impracticable towards Ak Durbund, before reaching which place it throws out a spur with perpendicular sides, which runs down to the spot thus called, ending in the abrupt drop shown on the left of the picture. Again, from the point above-named, whence what may be called the left ridge of the "Durbund" is thrown out, another spur goes on to the east (it is seen in the ridge shown in the centre of the sketch), and about two miles beyond Ak Durbund throws out another ridge to the S., which is again connected with a spur which runs E. and W., parallel with the parent ridge. The westerly prolongation of this spur comes down to within 200 yards of what I have called the left ridge of the Durbund, thus itself forming the right ridge (shown on right of sketch). Between these two ridges is the only road, and this has been closed by a high, strong, stone wall, built right across from hill to hill, commanded on either flank by strong towers on the heights as well as by a strong little fortlet to the rear. Thus, as long as the garrisons



II. VIEW OF AK-DURBUND. [*To face page* 24.



II. GORGE OF THE AB-Y-MUSHUDD, ABOVE POOL-I-KHATOON. [*To face page* 25.

hold out, no Toorkmun or other evil thing can get through the "White Gateway" or barrier.

Next day, 25th, we were only to make a short march of four miles to Shorjah, as it was the last place between Ak Durbund and Dowlutabad, where there was water, and it was, of course, an object to get as far on our road as possible. The first thing to be done was to pull down a portion of the wall to enable our column to get through, and then the road turned to the NE. and ascended to the top of a low, easy pass (over the cross spur noted above), in two miles, then descending over open downs covered with "pista" bushes and the rough easy ravines to Shorjah, a little opening in the defile, followed by the river.

Here there were three or four small towers, and a fortlet garrisoned by about fifty men, who did not seem at all to appreciate their being thus needlessly advanced beyond the safe shelter of Ak Durbund. The water here in the river is brackish, but there is a good spring of drinking water about two miles up the defile, and fuel, and grazing for horses and camels are very abundant.

In the afternoon, about four, we were on the move again, and from the way in which everybody huddled together, it was evident they were all in a blue funk of Toorkmuns. The road almost immediately crossed over the dying end of the Moozduran range, and ascending the top of this I saw before me for the first time, the much dreaded, much talked of, Dusht-y-Toorkmun, a name which no Persian, east of Shahrood, speaks of but with bated breath.

The "plain of the Toorkmuns" as yet, at least, showed no signs of deserving the first part of its name, for no plain was to be seen, but only a series of bold

undulating ridges, which, except for their sandy nature and absolute want of all life, might have been in Devonshire. The feeling with which I looked on this expanse, the happy hunting grounds of the greatest set of villains which even this wicked world has perhaps ever produced, was one of intense curiosity, mingled, let it be told, with some awe—something of the feeling one has when, after long marches, one first sights the enemy's stronghold which one has come to attack lying peacefully in a far distant plain.

Here every one instinctively halted, and gave one long look at the bare rugged hills behind, which, notwithstanding their aridity and unsightliness, looked down on the way to home, while in the other direction was the way to—where? I think I saw many shudder, I am sure I saw many green cheeks and blue lips as this thought suggested itself.

I was standing by the "Surteep," and he, too, though I daresay as brave as a lion against an open foe, did not half like plunging into the unknown, or giving the word which would cause the seething mass of confusion which composed his command, to move on—on to those undulating hills which look as if expressly made for an ambush. At last he said, "Let us go; Toorkmuns or no Toorkmuns we must not delay." Then the word went round, and every one called out boldly "Forward!" yet a good many took care their animals should not move, till seeing others going on ahead all gathered courage and the whole throng moved down the low pass.

Up to this moment, my experience of Persian troops had shown me little but utter disorder and confusion; but I thought, after all it does not matter, there is no danger here, no doubt when they really get into the dangerous tract I shall see that fear, if nothing else,

will induce them to advance in better order. But I was wrong; the only idea which any one seemed to have was to huddle as much together as possible, so that Abbass Khan's army, which, if it had been properly handled, was really a very compact little force of a battalion of infantry, three guns and some 500 horsemen, was quite lost in a chaotic throng of camels, ponies, mules, and donkeys, so that their fighting powers were completely annulled.

I did not like this: for the last six days I had been hearing dreadful stories of the prowess of the Tukkeh Toorkmuns, and though I received these "cum grano," I could not but think that we were liable to attack, and this way of doing business quite shocked my military sensibilities. I therefore went up to the Surteep, and said, "You surely are not going to advance with your command jumbled up in this fashion?" "What can I do?" said the poor old man, with a comical look of perplexity. "Nobody will obey *my* orders." "But don't you see," said I, "a couple of hundred Toorkmuns could put the whole of such a helpless mob to flight." "Yes, I know, but it's no use talking to them. I told them all before the cavalry were to go ahead and the baggage in rear, but they won't obey."

Seeing it was no use trying to get him to help, I then galloped off and got hold of Mahamad Khan, who was the principal cavalry leader, and after a good deal of argument, got him to separate his horsemen from the main body and send them on a mile or two ahead; but he plainly did not see the fun of bothering himself with precautions, thinking that if it was willed they should get to Surrukhs they would get there, advance guard or no advance guard; and if it was not so fated, why they would just have to go to Merv.

I then went to Alayar Khan and found him much more sensible, and he at once agreed to take his men out to the threatened flank. Next I went to the Sooltan of the gunners, and he agreed with me, it was all very lamentable. "If they do come," he said, "I can do nothing, what with these (zuns) women, and (ooshturs) camels, and these infernal infantry (surbazes), with their donkeys."

I found nothing could be made at all of the infantry, of which no two men were together, and whose officers were riding about, some on ponies and some on baggage-animals, all over the place; and as for trying to get the baggage a little straight, I saw that was a bad job, and so I resigned myself to what fate had in store.

Night had now fallen, but there was a fine moon, and one could see a short way a-head, and so taking my "boy" with me, we rode on a-head, and were thus in the safest place, because, if the Toorkmuns had come, they would probably have made straight for the baggage. On we went the whole night through, over a vast undulating sandy plain, the silence only broken by the monotonous tinkling of the mule bells; and I was never more glad to see dawn appear.

Presently we came in sight of Dowlutabad, and even its blank mud walls afforded some relief after the anxieties of the night. Riding up we found the gates closed, and the garrison, which I afterwards found to consist of sixteen men, on the alert. The place was large enough to hold 400 men, so I think the garrison was wise in abandoning all the rest of the fort to its fate, and assembling in one tower over the gateway. When daylight fully disclosed to them that we were not Toorkmuns, they came down and opened the gate, and it was a real pleasure to see the delight with which

the poor devils welcomed their people. They seem to have an awful time of it, for days together they are not able to stir out of the fort, or they would be pounced on by the prowling bands of Toorkmuns which they constantly see from the walls; and they took advantage of our presence to rush out, and taking every animal of their own, and as many more as they could get the loan of, they made off to the river-bed, about half a mile off, and piled them up with fire-wood. They had a good supply of provisions, and the Surteep gave them some more, and there was a well about 20 to 30 feet deep inside the fort. They had no women with them, and altogether I should say they had about as hard a time of it as any warriors I ever heard of. We had come about thirty-five miles in the night, on a bearing of from 18° to 40°, the last eight miles being 30° as straight as a die.

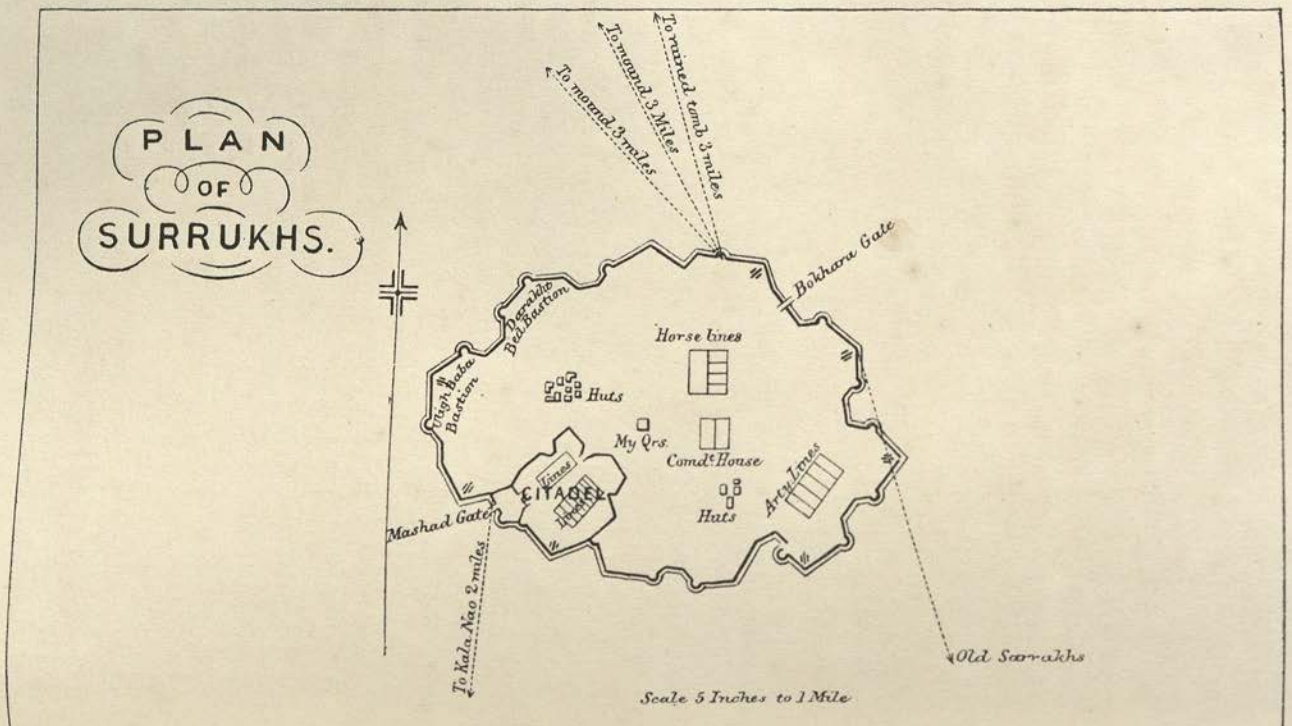
The Surteep was so delighted at getting over the dangerous part of the road, that he determined to go on to Surrukhs the same day, and so about noon we were off again, and every one was so pleased with the near prospect of safety, that it became a regular devil take the hindmost scurry, and the noise was terrible.

The distance was eight miles in a direction 350°, and the road led over a waste plain of excellent soil about a mile or so from the left bank of the Tejund River, which ran in a very diminished stream between high steep banks. Although remonstrated with on the temerity of such a proceeding, I preferred to ride off to the flank along the edge of the river bank. There really was no danger, for I could see to the front very clearly, and if Toorkmuns had lurked in the Tamarisk jungle of the bed, I could have got back to the main body before they could have even got out of their lair.

We passed several ruins of forts, and one fort about three miles from Surrukhs which was inhabited and named Nowrozabad.

The sun was very hot, and I was extremely glad to get into the immense fort of Surrukhs, and reach the quarters which a captain of the infantry regiment very kindly gave up to me. I do not know that there is anything in this wicked world so grateful to the senses as a bath following such a day as we had had. After the shudder caused by the first trickle of the water, and one feels it caressingly gliding down the fevered limbs and its cool gush on one's heated brow, one exclaims in the ecstasy of the moment, "If there is bliss upon earth, it is this, it is this."

Next morning, 27th July, I rose refreshed after a deliciously cool sleep on the top of my quarters. I rose, and climbing up the worn and scarcely practicable steps, got on to the top of one of the north towers and looked round. The scene that met my eye is easily described. To the north stretched one vast plain, which, except for a few mounds and a ruined mosque marking the site of one of the former towns of Surrukhs, was unbroken by tree, bush, mound, or undulations as far as the eye could reach. The Tejund, it is true, winds round to the NW., but its bed is low, below the level of the plain, and so nothing can be seen of it. It was a strange feeling to look out on this wide interminable expanse, and think that for an arc of 80°, there was not for over 300 miles perhaps one single drop of water, or one human being. To the NE. lay the road to Merv, stretched out beyond the dark tamarisk foliage in the bed of the Tejund. To the east all was clear; to the SE. were undulating rounded ridges (covered with little black dots, which they told



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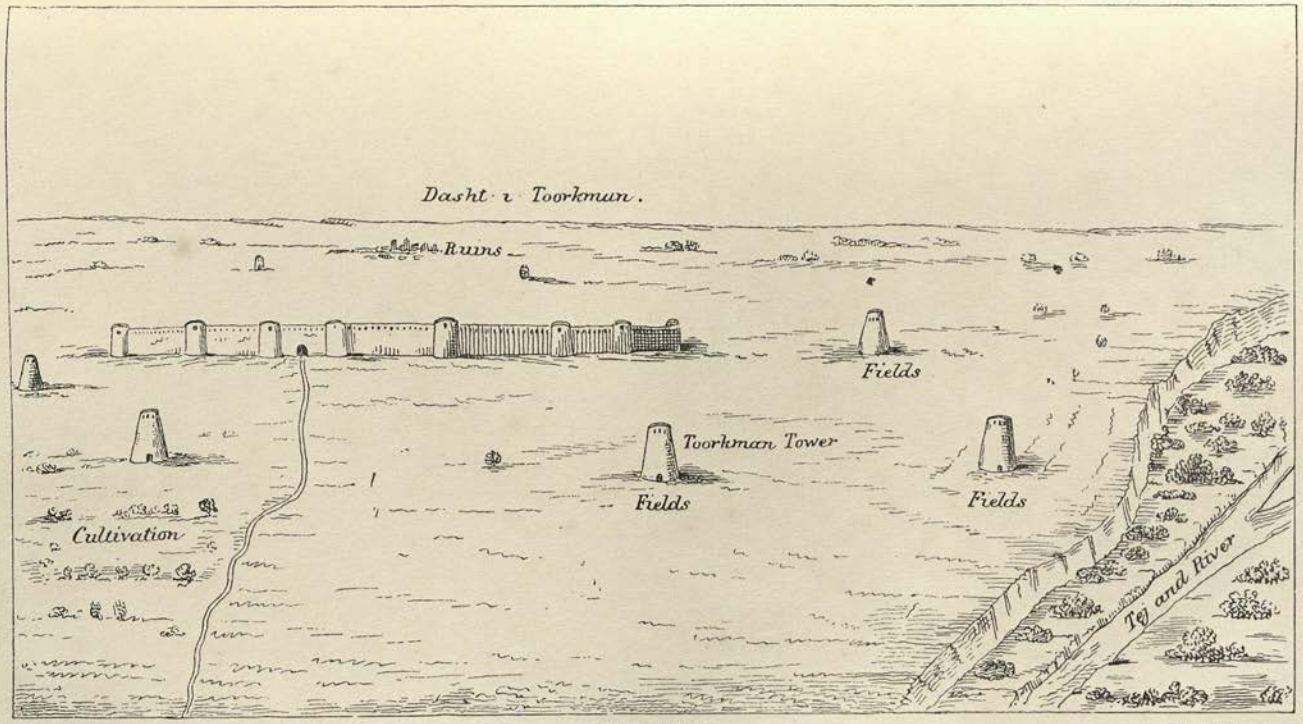


II. SURRUKHS. [*To face page* 31.

me were "pista" bushes), extending towards the Moorghab. To the south was the Moozduran ridge we had come through, and a little way north of west was a confused mass of rugged ridges, among which I was informed lay the famed stronghold of the great Nadir.

As we were to stay here two days, I occupied the next evening in making a plan of the fort; a proceeding to which the Surteep made no sort of objection. This plan, I regret to say, was among the papers stolen from me on my way between Nukshvan and Erivan; and so I have been obliged to reconstruct the accompanying plan from the notes I found in my note-book. It is of course, not so satisfactory as the original, but it gives a good idea of the nature of the place.

The following is a little sketch I drew of the fort from Nowrozabad on the way in, which will give some idea of the view to the north.

The fort of Surrukhs has a garrison of one battalion of infantry, numbering some 700 men, eleven guns, good, bad, and indifferent, and a few horsemen; but the dimensions of the fort are such that it would take ten times this number to man the walls even in the most inefficient manner. Its trace is that of an irregular polygon, with eleven bastions and numerous intermediate towers for musketry. On the south is the arg or citadel, which is a similar work to the above, cut off as it were from a part of its walls. In the citadel are quarters for infantry and artillery, but many of the former live in lines in the centre of the fort. There is a sort of bazar inside the fort, and numerous detached enclosures and hovels, where members of the garrison live. Some of the men have their wives with them, but this luxury is chiefly confined to the

higher ranks; and there are a few, very few, artisans and shopkeepers.

Outside the fort are a number of Toorkmun towers, and round each of these is a small patch of ground, cultivated by the men of the garrison, and watered from wells. The soil is everywhere of a light sandy nature, but as there is abundance of water at a depth of about 20 feet, no doubt it would be capable of affording large crops. Were the Toorkmun question for ever at rest, I see no reason why Surrukhs should not become a place of considerable importance, as a large population could easily be supported by agriculture alone, and its convenient position with reference to Mushudd and Herat on the south, and Khiva and Bokhara on the north, marks it out as a future probable entrepôt of commerce.

With regard to its strategical importance, I think a glance at the map will show that in the complications, which must arise ere the Russo-Indian question can be deemed settled, its future is likely to be a stirring one. Placed at the junction of roads from Herat and Mushudd, by the Hurree Rood and Ab-y-Mushudd valleys respectively; and at the best entrance to the province of Khorassan from the north, it cannot fail to exercise a very serious influence on the momentous issue of the above question. This must happen, whether it falls into the hands of the friends of England or into those of her foes. Whether Russia uses Surrukhs as a base for offensive measures against Herat, or England as a defensive outpost to defeat any such operations, that position will be heard of again. And if my feeble voice can effect a warning ere it is too late, let it here be raised in these words: *If England does not use Surrukhs for defence, Russia will use it for offence.*

Commercially, it is admirably situated for drawing to it all the trade between Toorkistan on the north, and Khorassan on the south; and it has every advantage of soil and water and climate that would be necessary for these purposes.

I think, however, the actual site now occupied is, from a tactical point of view, too far forward, and I should myself be inclined to draw it back as far as Dowlutabad, near which, on the right bank of the river, are some heights, which might soon be rendered a very strong position for a fort, while arrangements might be made for storing water in the river bed below to any extent.

On the 28th, after a good deal of difficulty, I got Abbass Khan to give me a couple of hundred horsemen, and with them I rode out across the Tejund for some twelve miles in the direction of Merv, and I can assure my reader it was with a very reluctant heart I returned. Beyond lay an endless desert, and deserts always have equally disturbing effect on me with unknown ranges of mountains, I always want to look beyond. And so it was, the spirit of adventure said, "Ride on; true, these people won't go with you, but qu'importe? go on by yourself, it would be fun to ride quietly by yourself right into the Tukkeh den;" but then rung out those words which were yet rankling in my breast, "You are not to enter Afghanistan or Toorkistan." So I had to come back.

There was nothing much to see. After crossing the Tejund, which is generally dry here except after rain, and the bed of which is still filled with thick jungle of tamarisk, the road goes north-east over a hard plain interspersed with sand drifts. Towards the end the sand assumed the mastery more and more, and on ahead there was apparently a complete sand waste.

On the way out to Surrukhs I had, of course, had many conversations with the different chiefs of our party, and, as may be supposed, much of this ran on the absorbing topic of Khorassan politics, the advance of Russia. During these conversations I had learnt that the Tukkehs had a Russian prisoner, whom they had taken in one of the fights with Markosoff's detachment during the Khivan campaign.

At Surrukhs I learnt more about him. He was said to be a gunner, but they did not know his name. The Tukkehs had offered to give him up for a ransom, and it was believed that the Wullee had made them some offer, but the Russians did not seem to take much interest in the matter, and so the wretch was allowed to languish in captivity.

Poor devil! I pitied him. I had heard so many stories of Toorkmun cruelty, these were so fresh in my mind, and after travelling so long among Asiatics one imbibes a fellow feeling for any one from Europe; so that perhaps my sympathies were more easily touched than they would have been if I had been sitting in an easy chair by my "ain fireside," with a halo of forgetfulness cast over Toorkmun horrors. I therefore longed to do something for him, but what to do? I could not go to him, I could not offer to ransom him, as it was said the Tukkehs wanted something like £2,000 for him. Yet I could not bring myself to pass by on the other side, and go away without showing the smallest sympathy for the poor wretch.

I therefore wrote him the following short note, putting it into indifferent Persian, and I daresay worse French, as the only two languages I knew anything of that he was likely to know also.

"My friend, I am told that you are a prisoner in the

hands of the Toorkmuns of Merv, and I write in the hope that I may be able to do something for you. If you will write me a letter to care of the British Agent, Mushudd, I will do anything in my power for you. I send you a little money, and if you want more I will endeavour to send some to you. Hoping I may be able to do something for you——"

This letter I gave to the Surteep, and he promised to forward it by some Tukkehs who were about to leave Surrukhs for Merv; but I regret to say, though I left orders at Mushudd on my starting for the Caspian, that any reply was to be sent to me, I never received any while in Persia, and thought, of course, Abbass Khan had probably never sent it. But it may be interesting to my readers to learn the after-fate of my letter. It appears that it was sent to Merv, and it duly reached the hands of the poor devil for whom it was meant (and whose name, I think, I afterwards heard was Ivanoff), and he replied to it. The reply was sent by the Surteep to Mushudd, and instead of reaching me fell somehow into the hands of the aged Governor of Khorassan, whom I have aptly named Zaeef-oo-Dowlah.

To this old gentleman's mind it at once suggested itself that here was an opportunity of showing what a sharp lookout he kept on the frontier, and at the same time making a little favour with the Russian Embassy. He therefore sent it to Tehran, no doubt with such comment as his feeble mind and his zeal in the Russian cause suggested. Here poor Ivanoff's simple reply seems to have been bandied about from the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to H.I.M. the King of Kings, to the Envoy and Plenipotentiary of H.I.M. the Tsar of All the Russias, and thence to the Envoy and Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty, till, like a snowball, it had

assumed in diplomatic minds quite serious dimensions.

By the time it reached England no doubt the snowball had reached alarming proportions, twisted and misrepresented by the crooked minds of Persian diplomats, and garnished with crafty innuendoes from facilely-lying Russian pens as it had been; and naturally I was asked to explain.

Of course there could be but one reply. The reader is in possession of the facts connected with this occurrence, and will therefore understand how it was I could say nothing but that my feelings of humanity had been too many for me.

I am free to confess I was annoyed at first at finding even such a trivial circumstance being made the subject of inquisition. It is not for me to cavil. Yet I may trace the spirit which prompted it to its real origin. I blame no individual or individuals, but I do unhesitatingly blame the mercenary and selfish spirit which has led the people of England to dictate, for the last ten years, a foreign policy unworthy of their great name, and most unfitting the future of a people who wish to remain great—a policy which, inculating tame submission to all slights and all insults, has made the continued application of the proud boast "Civis Romanus sum" to English people a mockery.

However this may be, I need hardly say the explanation I was enabled to offer was deemed by Her Majesty's Government quite satisfactory, and I therefore now only pray that poor Ivanoff may some day come to know that my offer of help was after all not mere emptiness.

On the 29th the relieved guard left for Mushudd. We got to Dowlutabad about noon, and halting a

couple of hours, en route, got to Ak Durbund on the morning of the 30th. I regret that I did not time this march, as I could not have believed camels could get along so quickly. It is evident if you want a Persian to progress quickly, you have only got to put the "Khauf-y-Toorkmun"* behind him.

However, once inside the hills they did not seem inclined to keep up the pace, so, inducing Mahamad Khan to send some men with me, I got to Robat-y-Mai on the 31st, and to Mushudd on the 1st by the same road as that by which we had marched to Surrukhs. I had tried to get them to take me straight from Mushudd to Kullat-y-Nadir but did not succeed; I give, however, a description of the road in the Appendix.

* The fear of the Toorkmun.

CHAPTER II.

MUSHUDD TO DURRAGUZ.

On my return to Mushudd I obtained quarters in a delightful garden on the south of the city, with the somewhat unpalatable name of the Bagh-y-Khoonee, or the "garden of blood,"—why so named I could not ascertain. I took up my abode in a tower of the form known in Persia as "Koolah-Furrungee;" I suppose from its resemblance to the immortal black hat of happier scenes. This consisted of an octagonal tower of two stories; the lower or ground floor I made into a store room, occupied the second floor in the day, and slept on the top at night, and was very comfortable.

These towers, with a few alterations and additions, can be made very habitable for Europeans, and I should always recommend their being used when available.

Though I applied for permission to go to Kullat-y-Nadir directly on my return, it took a week before I could get it, during which the time hung rather heavily on my hands, as eating grapes and sleeping begins to pall after a bit.

There was a very decided attempt made to get me to go and see Mahamad Ayoob Khan, a rebel son of the Amir of Kabul, and own brother to the gallant Yakoob whom that wily potentate had got safely in prison. Under other circumstances I should have been glad to have seen Ayoob, but I thought that with the facili-

ties for the manufacture of falsehoods which abound all over Asia, it might cause some embarrassment, and give the Amir another grievance with which to hide his own treacherous designs. Therefore I declined. I, however, often met his men about, and once I came across Ayoob himself, whose salute I duly returned. He seemed half inclined to call on me to stop, but seeing that I did not encourage the idea he desisted.

"More Persico" Ayoob was well treated at Mushudd, and had quarters and a pension of 4,000 tomams a year assigned to him. The fact is, the Persians always do, and always will, hanker after Herat, and so they are ever ready to receive any fugitive chief from that country in the hopes of making use of him at a future date, as a stalking-horse for their own purposes. In addition to Ayoob, they have now got a son of Sooltan Jan's called—I think—Shah Naroz Khan, at Tehran, and a grandson of Yar Mahommed at Birjund, any of whom they are ready to play off against the Afghans, and any of whom, moreover, are quite ready to be played off.

I got away at last from Mushudd with great difficulty, on the 7th August, but only rode out to the tomb of Khajeh Rubbee, about four miles to the north, as I wished to get everything right before starting, and also to see this celebrated mausoleum. There is nothing peculiar in the style of architecture of this tomb, which is a square building with a single-domed roof, but the enamelled tiles with which it is covered outside, and probably lined inside. The place is so overgrown with trees that no thoroughly good view of it is obtainable, and it is only by walking round and round it, and making a whole out of the glimpses obtained of it through the foliage, that one can understand the plan of the

ornamentation. This is no doubt very beautiful, and the patterns are in the greatest variety, from the simplest squares or octagons of one colour, to patterns either worked out complete in one tile or else extending over many. The prevailing colours are dark blue, very dark brown, and a lovely pale sky blue; but white, yellow, green, buff, brown, and black are also plentifully used. The brickwork of the building is of the poorest description, and this seems to be the case with all similar edifices in Persia, and I attribute the fact that it seems impossible to keep one of these tiled buildings in repair, in a great measure to the swelling and bulging on contraction of the bricks underneath. The garden in which this tomb is situated has been a pretty one, and even now the fine avenue of plane-trees from the gate, though short, is very attractive; but it has like everything else been allowed to go to ruin, and is now a jungle. The situation is good, being a terrace overlooking the low valley of the Ab-y-Mushudd, with its numerous villages, gardens, and fields, and having a fine view of the main range to the north.

The inside of the dome is not made of tiles, but of a sort of raised work in cement, on which flowers, are brought into relief. Now the colour of all these flowers has completely gone, and there is nothing to be seen but a number of unseemly white patches. But even if the colours were intact, the effect would, I think, be much more gaudy than beautiful, and, from the few specimens which remain, there was evidently but little taste or skill displayed in the drawing of the flowers. Below the dome, all round the tomb is a broad border of blue tiles, with Arabic inscriptions in white, which has a very appropriate effect. Below this again, is a perfectly lovely pattern of enamel tile-work

in blue and white, and arranged in octagons, and eight pointed stars; certainly the best I have seen, and Abbass Khan tells me, as good, if not better, than anything in Persia.*

The garden of this place is a good deal frequented by the people from the city, but in the gateway are capital quarters, which a few screens would make quite private, and then these would form about the best dwellings to be found round Mushudd.

I was amused here by a party of holiday-makers, chiefly women, who came from the city to do the gardens, and as their idea of pleasure was so different from that of a similar party in England, I will describe what I saw, for the benefit of any fair reader who may wish to introduce a new mode of picnic-ing. In the first place, there were only two or three of the male sex. These were evidently fathers and brothers, and perhaps this will account for their being a little dull. On first arriving the women were full of spirits, laughing and talking like their fair sisters elsewhere, and then they all made for a sort of platform on one side of the tomb. Here, I thought, they will open their picnic baskets, and surely, under the exhilirating influence of sekunj beer and sweetmeats, I may have a chance of seeing some of their charms. I was, however, disappointed, for no sooner had they sat down, than rolls of bedding were brought by boys and women, and the whole bevy went off to sleep; their male protectors following their example under the trees a little way off.

* Khanikoff says, "This tomb is that of the tutor of the Imam Alee Reza. It was erected by Shah Abbas, in 1031 A.H., or 1053 A.D., on the ruins of an ancient mosque. The "belle caisse de bois sculpté," which forms the tomb of the Saint, is a very ordinary piece of workmanship. It was brought from India.

I thought, of course, this was only to rest themselves after their ride, and that the fun would begin in the afternoon; but I was disappointed, for about four they all uncoiled themselves, and waddling out of the door, were no more seen; thus having had a real happy day of it.

The following are some of the bearings and approximate distances I was enabled to get from the terrace below the tomb, at Khajeh. Rubbee Keneegosha 105°, about eight miles distant; Syudabad 104°, one mile; Kahda 125°, four miles; Chah Ishmail Koo, two miles; Kalata, one mile; Jow Farosh 148°, one mile; Atar 150°, one mile; Sarmajkand 180°, two miles; Chaish 240°, half a mile; Aokuh 230°, two miles; Kalat Bogha 266°, three-quarters of a mile; Saadabad 300°, three-quarters of a mile; Shooturuk 87°, two miles; Dehund 70°, two miles; Zerkahi 35°, one and a half miles; Farrahgird, two and a half miles; Iwuzee 27°, one and a half miles; Gara 18°, three miles; Hoosenabad, one and a half miles; Dareh 12°, five miles; Sar Asia 340° three miles; Mulabad 330° half a mile; Kullat Mushuddgoolee 305°, five miles.

From Khajeh Rah the road goes down to the stream of the Ab-y-Mushudd or Kushuff road in about one and a half miles, and crosses this river, here only about thirty feet wide, by a good masonry bridge, the Pool-i-Shah. It then ascends over a low undulation to the village of Darveh, whence it is level for two miles to that of Furrakheh, and descends into a parallel valley, from which it continues along a watercourse (the village of Parmeh two miles off on the right) for eight miles to the defile in Durbund of Undurokh. It passes through a cultivated country, with villages on either side, amongst which the largest are, at nine

and a half miles, Khushabad, at ten and a quarter miles Manaiva, and at twelve miles Regun. The latter is situated most picturesquely on both sides of, and at the head of, a small valley, bounded by rounded bare hills, to the summit of which its vineyards reach. It, or rather its site, reminds me very much of some of the villages in the south of France. The village of Undurokh is passed at the fourteenth mile, and the Durbund of Undurokh is entered at about the fifteenth and a half mile and continues for one and a half miles, it consists simply of the bed of the stream, and varies in breadth from thirty to one hundred feet, including space occupied by water. The cliffs on either side rise sheer out of the water to a height of 200 feet, and are quite impracticable, while the bends of the defile offer numerous excellent sites for forts. Altogether it is one of the very strongest places I have ever seen, and could not be forced against a determined defence; luckily, therefore, it can easily be turned by infantry going to right or left over the hills, which are not difficult. There is an old ruined fort above the defile, but, as it is not visible from it, it cannot have been of much use. Kardeh, which I make out to be about nineteen miles from Khajeh Rah, is situated in a small valley running north and south two miles, and about three quarters of a mile broad, the whole covered with cultivation and gardens. The village is at the north end, near the Durbund of Al, and is a small place containing forty houses of Koorban Toorks sent here by Shah Abbas. It is however the residence of the chief of the small subdivision of Cholai, which extends from Undurokh to Hurkutt and contains sixteen village, among which the principal are Murrush, Balghoor, Seej, Al, Hurkutt, and Gosh. The climate

here is said to be more severe than that of Mushudd; but I doubt this, as though it is undoubtedly higher, perhaps 800 feet, it is infinitely better sheltered, and there are none of the violent winds which are so disagreeable at Mushudd.

About one mile from Kardeh, in a defile to the left, are said to be some caves which are reported to contain men's bones. My informant said they were extensive, so much so that nobody had ever got to the end of them. He appeared to know nothing more of them than having been once to the entrance, and no one in the village was any wiser.

I left Kardeh on the 9th August, and made a long march to Vardeh; the distance was not very great, but the road was not good, and I took a long time in traversing it. I certainly have never seen a stronger bit of country than the twenty-seven miles passed over to-day, it being one continual succession of impregnable defiles, any one of which would make the road celebrated. Starting from Kardeh, one enters almost directly into a defile, the road going down the river bed, and perpendicular cliffs rising up on either side without a break, without a ledge on which a goat could rest, for 200 feet. This continues without any intermission for four miles to the village of Al, the roadway, or rather bottom of the ravine, being from forty to one hundred feet broad, and the path crossing continually from side to side; showing that the defile would be impracticable during floods, and that it is extremely dangerous at the season of the rains. Al is a small village of about fifty houses, situated in a small opening in the defile about one mile long by 400 yards broad, and its houses, cultivation, and gardens, take up the whole of the level ground at the foot of the cliffs,

II. ENTRANCE TO THE DURBUND-I-JAOR. [*To face page* 45.

which rising as steeply as ever on all sides are very peculiar. They rise from the bed of the stream at an angle of 45°, and are about thirty feet thick and of a height above the rest of the hill, diminishing from one hundred feet or so at the stream to six or eight at the top. They are quite straight, at right angles to the defile, and occur at regular intervals of thirty paces, the ends of one overlapping that behind, so that the road zigzags round each, and it seems as you round each that you have arrived at a *cul-de-sac*. From the north end of this defile, which is three quarters of a mile long, the road opens out into a small valley, and the first view of the Kullat-y-Nadir is visible. This consists of a straight ridge running east and west, crowned by cliffs from twenty to 200 feet high, without a single break or track by which a goat could ascend.

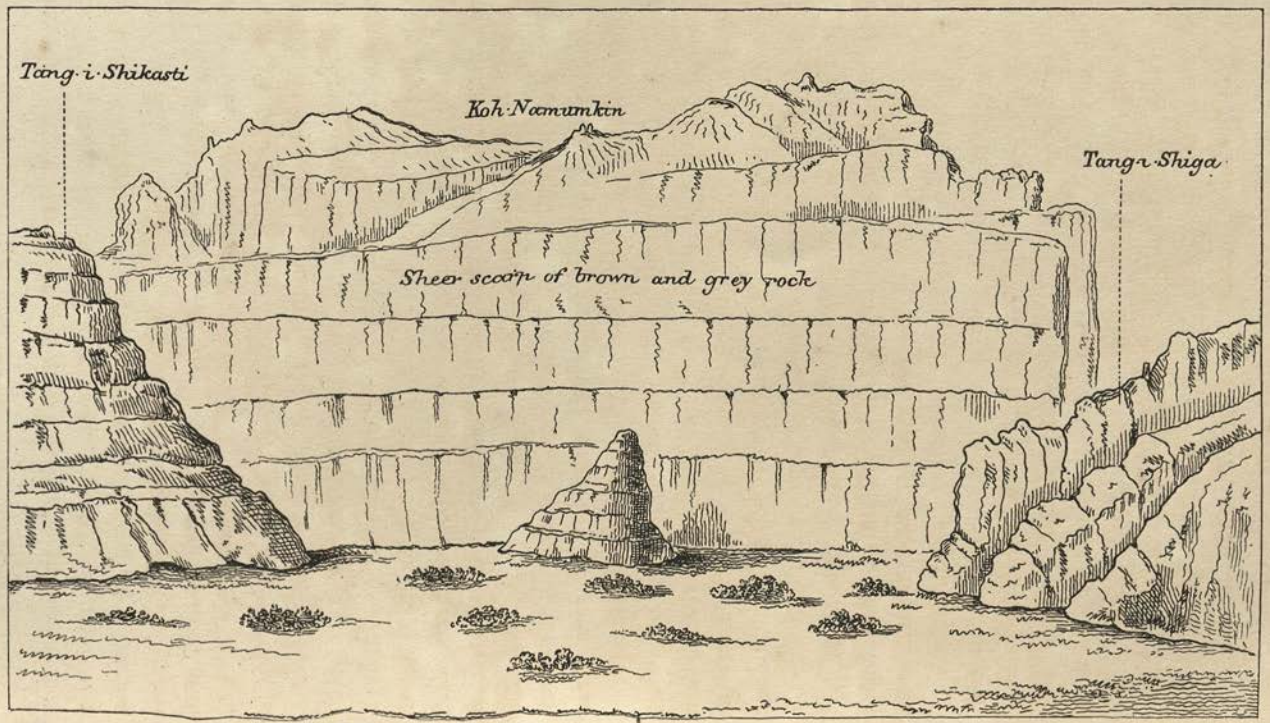
On leaving Al the defile becomes exceedingly narrow for half a mile, not more than forty feet wide, and is commanded by an old fort in a very commanding position on the left, which also sees down the whole valley. This fort is now abandoned, but it is in such a strong position that its site would be sure to be occupied in the event of hostilities in this defile, and it would have to be taken before any force could proceed onwards; it would be a very hard nut to crack.

The defile now opens slightly but does not reach the breadth of even the smallest glen, and it is still bounded by the same tremendous cliff. At seven and a half miles a stream joins from the right, and above the junction is a curious conical hill with scarped sides, called Panj Mara, which offers another impregnable site from which to command the pass. Here there is a small valley one mile long, and at the end of it the road splits in two, the direction of that to the left going by an

exceedingly difficult defile called Tangi Shikasta, which I will presently describe; the other going over the hill dividing it from the right or Sreja defile, and going eventually two miles on, but the point where these roads separate is a position of surpassing strength. The road leads straight up to a noble cliff, going between precipices, and apparently coming to a *cul-de-sac*, as no sign of a road is seen

The hill rises 400 feet above the defile and searches every foot of it for a mile, and the road on reaching it turns sharp to the right and left, only, however, to be confronted on both sides by cliffs of equal grandeur and equal inaccessibility which flank the road. This position could certainly not be forced in the face of any opposition, and there is no path near by which it could be turned that would not also be closed. It would be possible to ascend the hills on the south bank of the defile, and, going along their crest, get in behind the above position half a mile to the rear, and descending from this to the Tang-y-Shikasta, whence a break-neck path leads up to the rear of the hill; but this path is so close that it would be impossible to get up by it unperceived, and no troops could force their way up. It might be possible by making a long detour of five or six miles to turn this position on its right, but the hills are so open that there would be little chance of doing so without being exposed, and the paths up to it are all of an extremely impracticable nature.

However, as there is no enemy in our way, we will go on, choosing the Tang-y-Shikasta as the shortest line. From the Koh-y-Na Mumkin the road for half a mile goes up a defile, which is not more difficult than that which has been passed through already; but here the "Broken Defile" begins. It is broken indeed, the road



II. IN THE SREJA DEFILE, ON THE ROAD TO KULLAT-Y-NADIR. [*To face page 46.*

leaves the bed of the river altogether, as this has taken to leaping down small drops, and goes along a ledge at the side, about four feet wide, amidst and over and round huge jagged rocks; on the left rises a *débris* of mighty rocks, heaped one on the other in wild confusion nearly to the top, where a sheer cliff stops all view; on the right is the river, with a drop of thirty or forty feet to it. This continues for 300 yards, when it gets a little more open. This defile is not practicable for mules even, and although one can ride up, it is a most disagreeable as well as dangerous feat. After one mile more of defile the road leaves the river, and ascends easily to a neck on the left, from thence descends again into the valley of the stream, and then becomes level, running along the lowest contour of the hills for a mile, when defiles again begin. This little valley belongs to the village of Sij, and is about a mile long by 500 yards broad, and would afford a good site for the encampment of a force, as there is abundance of water and fuel, and some forage.

We now came to the Dahna Bahurt, the name of a succession of very difficult and narrow defiles, affording positions of impregnable strength, which are divided from each other by little glens, about 100 yards broad. There are five of these defiles, and a like number of glens in the next two and a half miles, and in one of the latter, where the road to Bulghoor turns off to the left, is a ruin called Robat Bulghoor. At the end of the last glen is the commencement of the Zow Peer Zun. Before entering this, however, we must really take breath, and look back at the tremendous country we have come through. For fifteen miles the road has run either in the bed of the river or along the sides of the cliffs, and nowhere has it been further off than 200 yards from these unassailable heights. It is in

reality one continuous defile, and throughout the whole length there are not more than half a dozen places where a goat could get up to the crest, which has everywhere the most complete command of the roadway. I have said, any one of these defiles is sufficiently strong to make the reputation of a route for impregnability. What then shall we say of a route which is *all* so grandly impregnable, so perfectly unassailable? Really to describe this route in detail would tire the reader; I could only repeat at every step what I said before, and the description of one part answers for all. The whole road is like a V, the only difference being when the strokes become a little more open. As a rule it is practicable for artillery, except in the Tung-y-Shikasta and a few other places, but all these could, if it was thought worth it, and the defile was in one's own possession, be made practicable by the plentiful use of blasting.

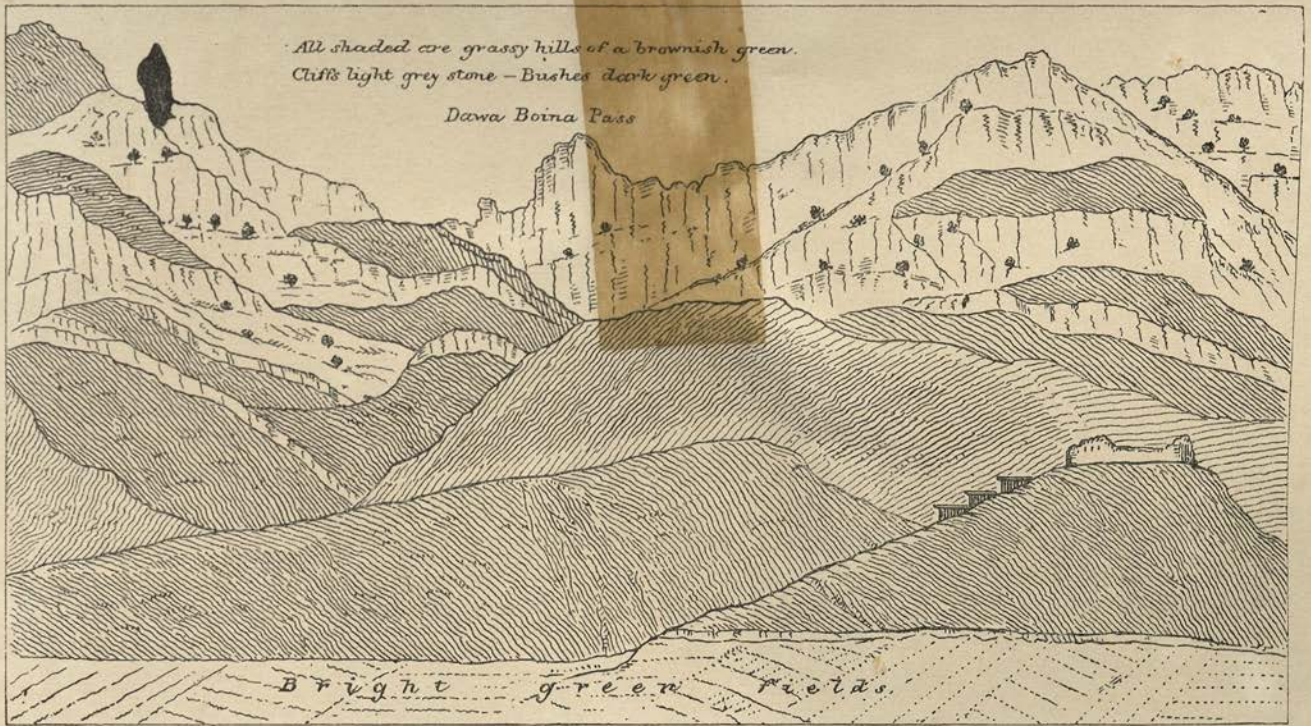
To return to the Zow Peer Zun, or old woman's defile. First, it is noticeable that this word Zow, which is said to be Toorkee, is also used for a defile on the Derajat frontier; secondly, that whenever there is anything more than usually disagreeable in the way of a pass or defile, the Persians always seem to attribute it to some "old woman"—name unknown. I am sure I cannot say why this is—my knowledge of Persian old women is as limited as my acquaintance with Persian young women, and so we must conclude that women in Persia do not (like Port) improve with age. Still I do not think any old woman could ever have been so thoroughly disagreeable as to have deserved that this defile should be named after her; for, although it may seem strange to say so, all that has gone before is easy compared with this one, or rather with the first 150 yards

of it. The roadway narrows down to five feet in one place, and to six, eight, ten in several, and it is throughout a regular "devil's staircase" of slippery rocks. On either side rises a succession of walls, which are ranged one behind the other on either side, in a sort of columns in echelon, dovetailing into each other. I should say that this defile was quite impregnable to a front attack; any way I should not like to try it, even if the old woman was all there was to oppose me. I could see no sign of a way by which it could be turned either, and my guide swore there was no other path either through the hills or over them. Altogether I would recommend any commander who has the disagreeable duty of getting to the other side of this defile given him, to "bide a wee," look about him, and see if there is no path by which it can be turned; for any goat-path, undefended, must be better than this, if held by a man and a boy. After 150 to 200 yards the defile opens a little, but still for a mile and a half further is quite as bad as anything on the road. Then it is with a feeling of intense relief one finds oneself at last out on the open hills, for really the country from Kardeh has been more like what one would see in a nightmare than anything one has ever beheld awake. Once through the defile the road turns south-east and then goes over open hills, ascending to the top of a neck by a rather steep path; it then turns more east and goes parallel with a frightfully steep ridge, rocky at the top, which, however, throws out huge buttresses of earth, which have to be crossed. There are eight or ten of these, and then the road ascends easily towards the Dawa Borne Pass, but at 150 yards from the top it zigzags up to get over the crest of rock which tops the whole ridge in the most difficult way. The descent on the

north is not so steep, and being over earth could be improved to almost any extent. One mile from the crest is the desolate looking village of Vardeh, the first in Kullat territory. It is a miserable place, inhabited by Toorks who call themselves Tartars, and say they came from Bokhara. They have a rather Mongolian type of countenance. The women here wear, instead of the blue or white sheet of the rest of Persia, a coloured sheet checquered just like a tartan. The tartans are generally quite different from ours, but the pattern is unmistakably a tartan. Some were very like the Scotch tartans; one resembled the Stuart, another the Macpherson, and a third the Murray I think.

The Karadagh range which we have just negotiated rises from the valley in hugh swelling bluffs, and is everywhere topped by a crest of perfectly perpendicular and impracticable cliffs of grey rock. On the south these bluffs dip boldly down to the stream, and then rise with equal abruptness into what appears to be a second parallel range, but which is separated at different points by water courses, whose sides are bounded by precipices 200 to 300 feet high, and whose beds form the "durbunds" we have come through. On both sides of this range, which is a spur of the main watershed between, the drainage of Mushudd and that of the Attruk valleys run down to the east and drain out into the Attruk plain.

From Vardeh the road at once descends into a narrow glen, which may be called a defile, and continues along it for two miles to a place called Bekh Koond, where a stream comes in from the left, and there are two or three houses, a tower, and some cultivation. Thence it takes the left valley, and almost immediately leaving it ascends easily over earthy rounded hills for two miles


All shaded are grassy hills of a brownish green.
Cliffs light grey stone – Bushes dark green.
Dawa Boina Pass
Bright green fields.

II. KARADAGH RANGE, FROM VARDEH. [*To face page 50.*

to the top of the Mirza Gooshtee Pass, a watershed which drains to Kullat on one side, and towards the Dusht-y-Toorkmun on the other. From this the path descends exceedingly steeply for one and a half miles to a narrow defile, bounded on the right by impracticable hills, on the left by one mass of sheet rock which comes shelving down in huge detached slabs at an angle of thirty degrees. Both the descent and the defile are commanded throughout by positions of the greatest strength, and neither could be attempted till clear of an enemy. After one and a half miles of comparative open, during which a path to the village of Al-i-gerum is passed, the road comes to the Durbund-i-Jaor, which is a succession of very narrow defiles divided by small open spaces, and flanked by the same column-like walls of rock which I have noticed before. The road leads down the valley for three miles close under them, and then turns sharp to the left along them till, three miles on, it comes to the south entrance of this celebrated stronghold, called Durbund-i-Arghawan Shah. Here there is a guard of two companies of regular infantry, and a few small villages perched on the ledge of the hill, mostly on the left.

From this the road winds along the lowest contour of the hills, and reaches the residence of the Khan at the small village of Ja-i-Goombaz in two and a half miles from the entrance. Unfortunately my friend Behbood Khan was unable to leave Mushudd so as to come with me; but I was received by his son, an extremely intelligent lad, and very good-looking. The Khan lives in a building called Mukburra-y-Nadir which is the queerest erection I have ever seen. It consists of a huge round tower, seventy feet high and about forty feet in diameter, surrounded by an octagonal

structure twenty-four feet high, while four sides are thirty-two feet in breadth outside, and four are sixteen. These contain rooms which are for the most part unoccupied. The whole building is composed of inferior bricks faced with a reddish sandstone. The tower is flanked all round by half pillars, which rise above the octagon about thirty feet, and certainly improve its appearance immensely. Though named after the great conqueror, there is every reason to believe that he only once resided in it. In this village there is another building, a goombuz or domed tomb now used as a mosque, four archways (eiwans) having lately been added to it. This is noticeable on account of the excellence of the ornamental tile work with which its exterior was once covered. The village, although the chief place in this small Khanate, has no claims to notice, consisting as it does of about one hundred wretched houses of mud built on the edge of the level ground.

I stayed two days at this place, and made the usual trips, up to the top of the Kummar of Khisht, and to the Nafta gate, but these did not enable me to see half as much of this really wonderful freak of nature as I could have wished. The road up to Khisht leads along the face of a precipice nearly the whole way, and is so narrow as to be quite dangerous, and this notwithstanding that fifty men could make it all right in a couple of days, as it is all composed of earth. On reaching the top you come to an undulating plateau without a tree, and at one edge is the desolate looking village of Khisht, while a mile to the east are the ruins of what is said to have been built as a residence by Nadir Shah. From Khisht I went up to the top of a high hill just above it, from which my guide the Naib

said the best view of Kullat was obtainable, though I may remark, *en passant*, that it seems to me the best view would be gained from the top of a hill called Baba Koomeklee. The prospect that presented itself on reaching the summit was certainly very extensive to the north. Beyond low hills lay a dreary looking waste, held in great awe and respect by the inhabitants, and best known to them as the Dusht-y-Toorkman, but which we generally call Attuk,* a word which simply means a boundary, or border frontier. To the NW., apparently in a small plain surrounded by low hills, were numerous black patches, which I was informed were the gardens of Mahamadabad, and the crest of the stronghold could be clearly traced as far as the hill of Baba Koomeklee, which shut out all further view in that direction, the SE. The place is called the kullat, or fort of Nadir, I suppose for want of a word to describe it better; but the fact is, there is nothing as far as I saw, anything like a fort. It is a district, or a basin fortified in the most wonderful manner by nature In shape it is something like a foot, and it must have a length of twenty miles by a breadth of two to four miles. The toe of the foot, points to the NW., and the whole outer edge is said to consist of the same impregnable cliffs as I have described as seen from the south. All along the south as far as I could see, these cliffs were of the same nature. and the hill ran in a direction from NW., to SE., almost as straight as a wall; but to the north, the hills though still almost as strong, become more irregular on their outward slope. Inside, the hill to the south shelves down very steeply, so steeply as to be impracticable for men, for about 400 feet, to an undulating plateau, which is inter-

* The river Attruck is sometimes called Attuk.

sected in every direction by huge ravines with perpendicular sides, which carry the drainage of this part to the main stream. To the north and west, the hills from the interior are generally speaking quite practicable for horsemen, and the outer edge is reached by a long shelving plateau which reaches right up to it, when there is a sudden drop of from 30 to 200 feet. Then near the Nafta Gate again, and also beyond it as far as I could see, the hills approach more to the form of those on the south. This district is divided into two unequal parts by a stream which enters it about two miles from its western end, and, running east and west, leaves it at the Nafta Gate eight miles off; the whole of the inner faces of the surrounding hills, *i.e.*, the whole space occupied by what is called the Kullat Nadir, drains into this stream. This basin cannot be less than fifty miles in circumference; it contains only seven villages, viz., Giro to the west, Khisht, Ja Goombuz and Nafta on the north bank, and Saryzur, Koola Zas and Aktush on the south. These I was informed by the Naib, who proved no exception in veracity to the rest of his countrymen, had formerly contained ten thousand houses, but now there were not more than two thousand. I had, however, got so accustomed to hear lies spoken, that observing my rule of never believing any one man's story, I had ascertained that Ja Goombuz was beyond doubt the largest village, and that there were only seven of them. Now this place had but one hundred houses, so that the outside number in the district could not be more than seven hundred; but I had also seen Khisht, Giro, and Nafta, which certainly have not more than fifty each; so that allowing one hundred for each of the others, which is more than they possess, the whole number would not be more than five hundred,

representing a population of about 2,500 souls (excluding the garrison), in a tract 20 miles by 4. It could no doubt support a larger number of inhabitants, perhaps twice the number; but the story that there were 50,000 people in it must be put amongst those flowers of speech in which Persians so delight. There is a considerable amount of water in the stream, even at the exit, and there is also a good deal of uncultivated land; but this bears a very small proportion to the whole extent, most of which is too far raised above the level of the stream to derive any benefit from it. Of course more land might be cultivated, but the out turn would not add very greatly to the resources of the basin, as the yield of land in these parts, which is dependent on rain as its only water supply (N.B. called Dehina), is very small and exceedingly precarious. The hills around, and especially the plateaux of Khisht and Giro must in the spring afford a very large amount of grazing, and as the hills outside are all of the same nature, there is no doubt that a very large amount of forage could be collected at this place, provided timely and sufficient arrangements were made to get it in before it was all burnt up. The supply of drinking water for both man and beast, is, of course, abundant and never failing. There is very little fuel inside, and outside the bushes from which it is collected are few and far between. I regret very much that owing to my ignorance of the place, I came by the Vardeh road. If I had known what I afterwards ascertained, I should have gone by the road usually taken by the detachment of artillery which goes from Mushudd by Kaneegosha, through Geep Kotul to Karategan, whence there are roads either by Kooshtanee through the heart of the place from SE. to NW., or along the Sutera south face,

and I should recommend any future traveller to take this route.

Regarding the strength of this place, there can, I should say, not be two opinions. It is, in fact, so exceedingly strong, that if the term impregnable can be used anywhere, it can here. For the fifty miles of its circuit, nature has indeed left hardly anything for man to do. There are only five entrances, viz., Arghawan, Nafta, Dehchah, Choobust, and Kooshtanee, and of these, the two first only are practicable for artillery, while the others are difficult even for mules. Besides these, there are several paths which are just practicable for infantry. I forbear attempting a list of these, as I do not think anything but going all round the place oneself would enable one to draw it up correctly. From what I saw, there were four such paths; 1. At a little to the right of where the road from Vardeh first comes under the cliffs and turns towards Arghawan. 2. By the ridge which connects Kullat in the north-west, with the mountain system on the south; this path is well known, and is called Koingoshee, and leads to Giro. 3. Immediately under the Sar Kummur Khisht peak. 4. Close on the left of the Nafta Gate. All these, however, are defended by towers, and could easily be rendered quite impracticable.

I ought to mention here that Kullat is not in any way isolated from the mountain system either to the north or south. In riding along its southern face, I could distinctly trace the connecting ridges which are situated about five miles SE. of Arghawan, and two miles NW.

There is thus, no doubt, that we have here an extremely strong position, in which any number of troops could be collected; but with all its strength

Kullat has two very fatal sources of weakness. First, it is situated to the north of an exceedingly difficult range of mountains, across which it would be very difficult to transport supplies, and if cut off from its supplies in this direction, it would not be possible to collect sufficient from the small villages dependent on the Khanate. Secondly, its size is a source of weakness; it would require a garrison far beyond the power of any state to devote to its care. In its present state, with its slender garrison of 500 or 600 half-hearted soldiers, scattered all over the place and separated from each other and all support by miles of difficult and almost impracticable roads, it is not probable that it would hold out very long against any skilful and determined attack, and as the Persian Government has not the men to spare to strengthen its garrison, or the sense and the means to do what is required in improving its interior communications, it is probable it will be found in very much the same state as that in which I saw it, by any general who may have occasion to go that way.

On the next morning, the 12th August, I rode down to have a look at the Nafta entrance. The road goes down the left bank of the river through fields for a couple of miles. It then ascends and descends over stony rounded spurs to the Bund-y-Dookhtur, a dam which stretches across the river above a natural waterfall. It is then very narrow, hanging over the river till it comes to an opening with fields and a pretty grove of trees. Going through this it crosses over to the right, and ascends over spurs and reaches the village of Nafta, a miserable place of about thirty or forty houses. Leaving the village it goes through narrow defiles to the Durbund or Gate of Nafta.

The hills here come down on either side to within

about 60 feet, and as they are sheer scarps, the only entrance is by the bed of the river, which is closed by a loop-holed wall made to let the river run through. Looked at from the north, it certainly seems perfectly impracticable, as, in addition to the above defences, every spot where the hill seems to offer the possibility of ascent, is either artificially further scarped, or topped by loopholed walls, while on each little bit of level ground above is a tower. If held in sufficient strength, it would be, I should say, quite impossible to force it, as in addition to the obstructions in front, the bed of the river is flanked by walls built upon the face of the cliff for a distance of 200 yards or so. Nevertheless, it was, not many years ago, entered by a party of 2,000 Tukkeh Toorkmuns, but this must be put down more to the negligence and paucity of the garrison, than to the strength or gallantry of the assailants. They, however, luckily did not attempt to hold it, else they might have given more trouble than they even now do.

There is always in Kullat a garrison of regular troops, and the duty is intensely unpopular with the men owing to the great losses they always suffer from fever. The fact is, the valley itself is probably very unhealthy and feverish, and the interior communications of the place are so bad, and it is so extensive, that it is necessary to concentrate the garrison at the two main gateways; and at the other two principal entrances, viz., the Durbund-y-Kooshtanee and the Durbund-y-Deh-y-Chah, at each of which is a weak company.

When I was at Kullat, the Chief, Behbood Khan, was unfortunately absent; but I had seen a good deal of him at Mushudd, and from what I saw, I should regard him as one of the ablest men in Persia. I had many long talks with him, and he certainly astonished

me by the amount of French and English he had picked up from poring over books in those languages. He could not speak them, as he had scarcely ever seen any one belonging to those nations; but he could read an English book, and make out slowly what its meaning was. I tried him more than once, and may mention that on one occasion I put before him my Gazetteer of Persia, and asked him to read the article Kalat Nadiri, which he did, and moreover he understood it, for he said it is a great deal more than thirty miles from Mushudd, and is out on a high hill. I then read it out to him and explained each sentence, and we came to the conclusion, that a more inaccurate description than that which I had compiled from Malcolm and Kinneir could scarcely have been penned.

I learnt in Mushudd from Abbass Khan that Behbood was a protégé of the Hissam-oo-Sooltan, a fact which proves the latter to have that instinct of great men, knowing a good man when they see one. In appearance he is a fine portly individual, with a frank expression and very simple honest manners.

Although the Chief was not present himself, the honours of the occasion were very efficiently performed by his son, a very handsome and gentlemanly boy, called, if I remember rightly, Yar Mungtosh, after his grandfather.

This youth, though only twelve years of age, behaved with a courtesy and manliness that could not be surpassed; and when I left I made a point of writing to Behbood an expression of gratitude for my reception, and my admiration of the fine qualities of his son. Without wishing to intrude into the sanctity of the "anduroon," I cannot refrain from saying, that boy's mother must have been a marvel of beauty.

The district under Behbood Khan extends from the crest of the Karadagh range on the south, to as far north as he may have the power to hold it; at present this only extends as far as the line Chache, Chardeh, and Mehrun; but there is no doubt that the natural frontier of Persia in this direction is the limit of possible cultivation, *i.e.*, the Tejund. On the west, the defile of Jirgaun is its boundary, and on the east it goes as far as Moozduran, north of the mountains.

In this extent of country, which is defended in every direction by a series of as strong defiles as are to be found in the world, there are not more than twenty to thirty villages, none of which have more than 100 houses, or are of any note for other reasons. I have mentioned those inside the stronghold, and the following is a list of some of those outside: *viz.*, Chache, Mehrun, Chardeh, Kemabad, Archingoon, Deh-i-Chah, on the north; Kara Fegan, Abgarm, and Khowa on the east; Vardeh, and Bekhkoond on the south; Ighdaleek, Charm, Senai, Sain, Khakkista, and Yirgaun on the west. Beyond what is required for the consumption of the inhabitants, this district produces nothing, and if we except the pretty striped silks used for coats by the men, and the silk or cotton tartan plaids of the women, there are no manufactures.

The Khan has the power of raising a body of about 300 horse, and on an emergency he might collect 100 more cavalry and 500 infantry matchlockmen; but it is doubtful whether these last could be kept up, for these people dislike foot work above everything.

At Kullat I had the pleasure of meeting the most intelligent officer of the Persian army I have yet seen, and in the Toorsheez regiment, of which he is the colonel, he has the smartest body of men I have seen

in that not very smart body, the Persian army. He is really very intelligent, and seems to take great interest in his work, and abstains, I understand, entirely from eating his men's pay (muwajib na mi khoorad), which is high praise for a Persian colonel.

The women here wear the same tartan sheets that I saw at Vardeh, and the effect is certainly more pleasing than that produced by the monotonous dark blue one sees elsewhere. The do not cover themselves up with the same strictness here as in the more orthodox Mushudd, and I consequently had many opportunities of judging for myself. While I saw one or two pretty faces, I must say I think that if most of those whom I beheld had been veiled, nothing would have been lost. A curious custom prevails here; the women, when they see a man coming, do not cover the whole face as elsewhere, but only the mouth, leaving the hair, eyes, and nose visible. What the idea of this is I do not know, unless they suppose the sight of their cherry lips would be too much for man. They also wear coats like the men, but they are made so as not quite to meet in front, and the two ends are connected by a rather neat buckle, consisting of three diamond-shaped pieces of silver, with a stone of some kind in the centre of each.

The people of Kullát seem to be fonder of "taking it out" on the morning, than elsewhere; and as in the hot weather at least, all sleep on the tops of the houses, they erect small tents of very thin material, in which they sleep. These at some distance off, and if there is a dark background, certainly do effect the purpose of veiling from vulgar eyes scenes of domestic bliss; but should it chance that you pass near one which has but the clear sky for a background, you get an intro-

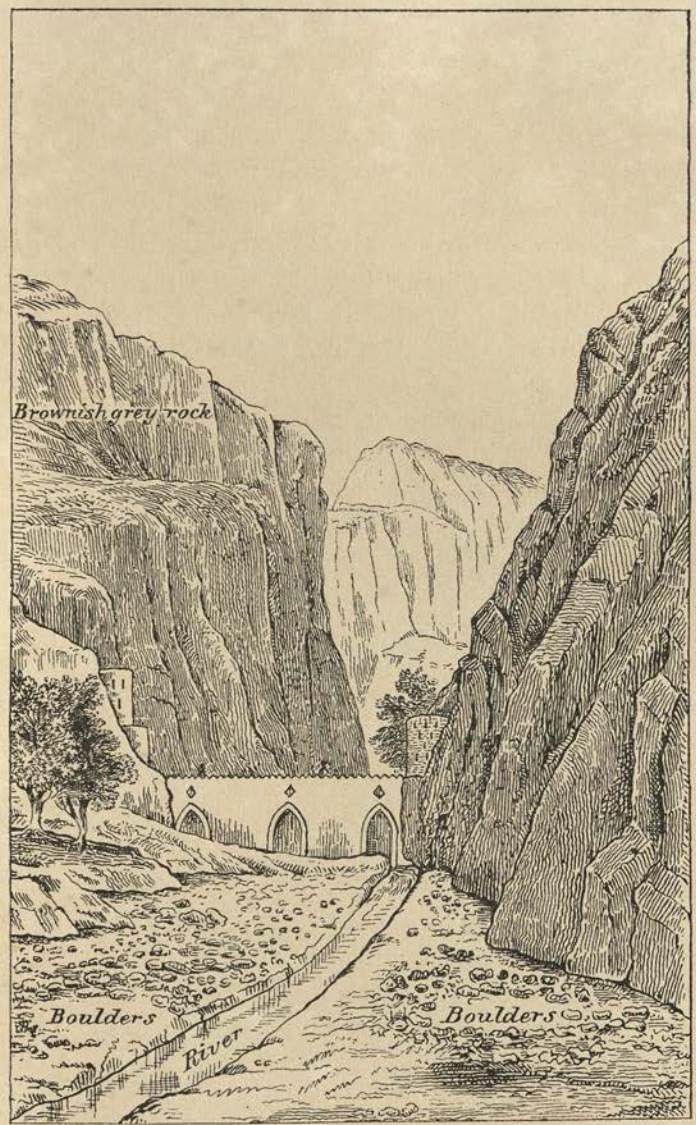
duction to phases of Eastern life to which you have hitherto been a stranger.

On Saturday, the 13th August, I rode away from Kullat as early as I could, but owing to the laziness of my servants, and the dilatoriness of my escort, it was daybreak before we started. The road to Durraguz goes back through the Arghawan gate, then turning to the right, ascends easily up a valley which is very stony at first, but latterly becomes more earthy, till the top of the Goyik Kotul, two miles from the gate, is reached. From this the hills round are bare and earthy with easy slopes and rounded tops, all being covered with magnificent fodder. To the north a sort of narrow plateau stretches towards the scarp of Kullat, into which it rises three miles off; this pass being on the watershed connecting it with the hills of Vardeh.

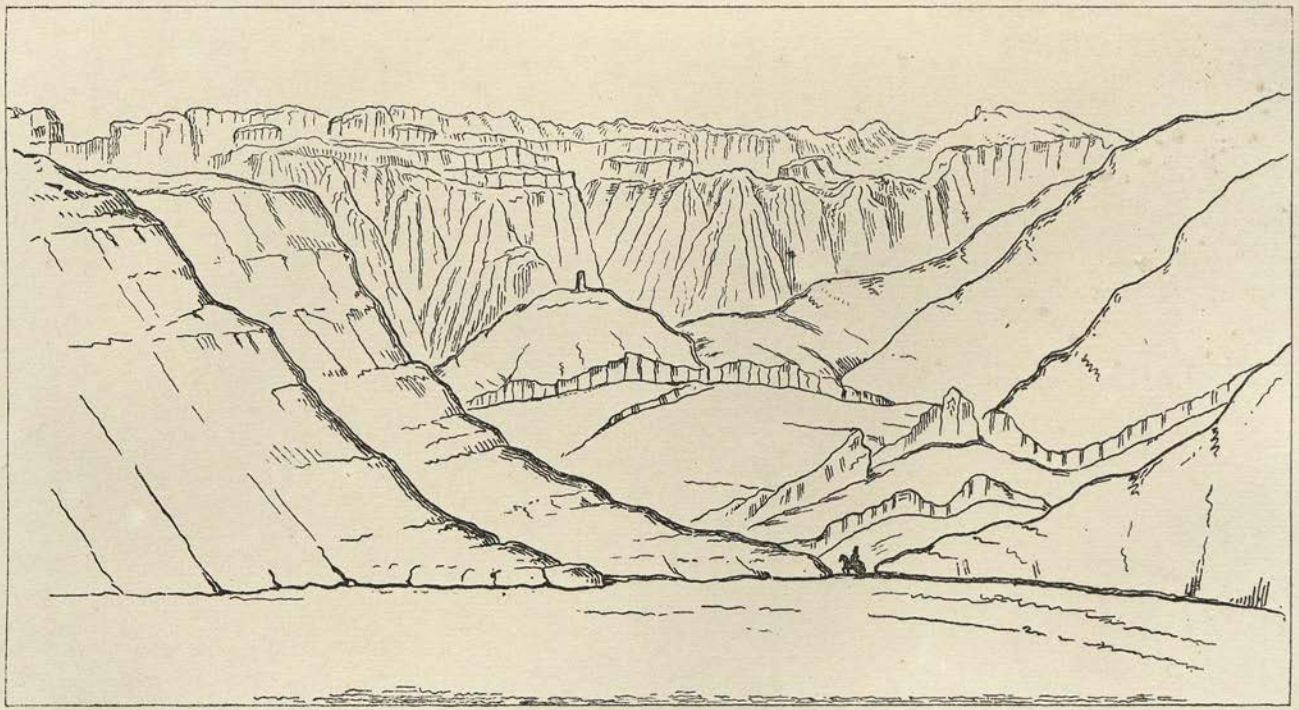
Before reaching the crest of the Goyik Kotul there is a path called Koingoshee, by which infantry and mountain guns could enter the fortress down to the village of Giro. The village of Archingoon was said to bear 337° from the top of the pass.

Thence the road goes on in a direction 227°, being commanded on the left by bold heights, the top of which form a plateau on which I was told there is fine grazing. It goes up and down numerous ravines, divided by spurs from the main range to the south. Some of these are broader and more open than the others, and in the first of these little valleys is the village of Churm, which is situated about a mile up the valley under a high rugged hill. It consists of about fifty houses, and is said to have been more than once visited by the Toorkmuns.

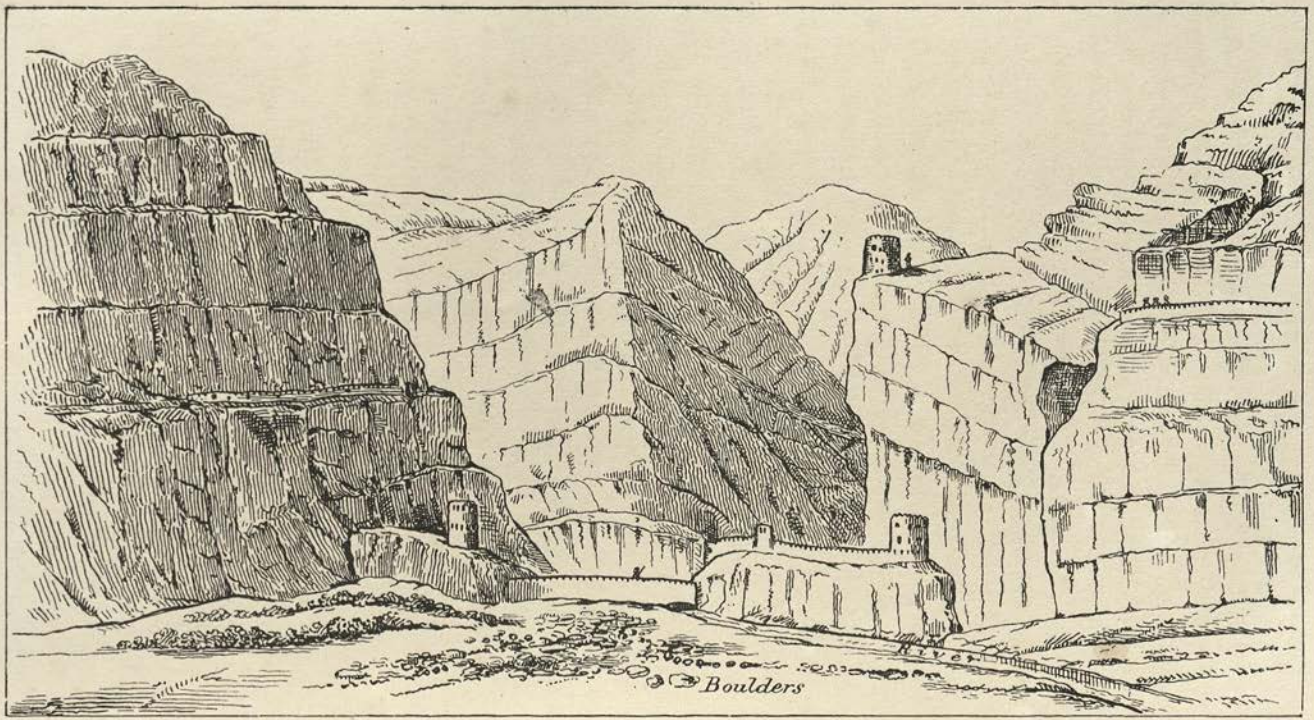
The road then ascends for a short distance a low



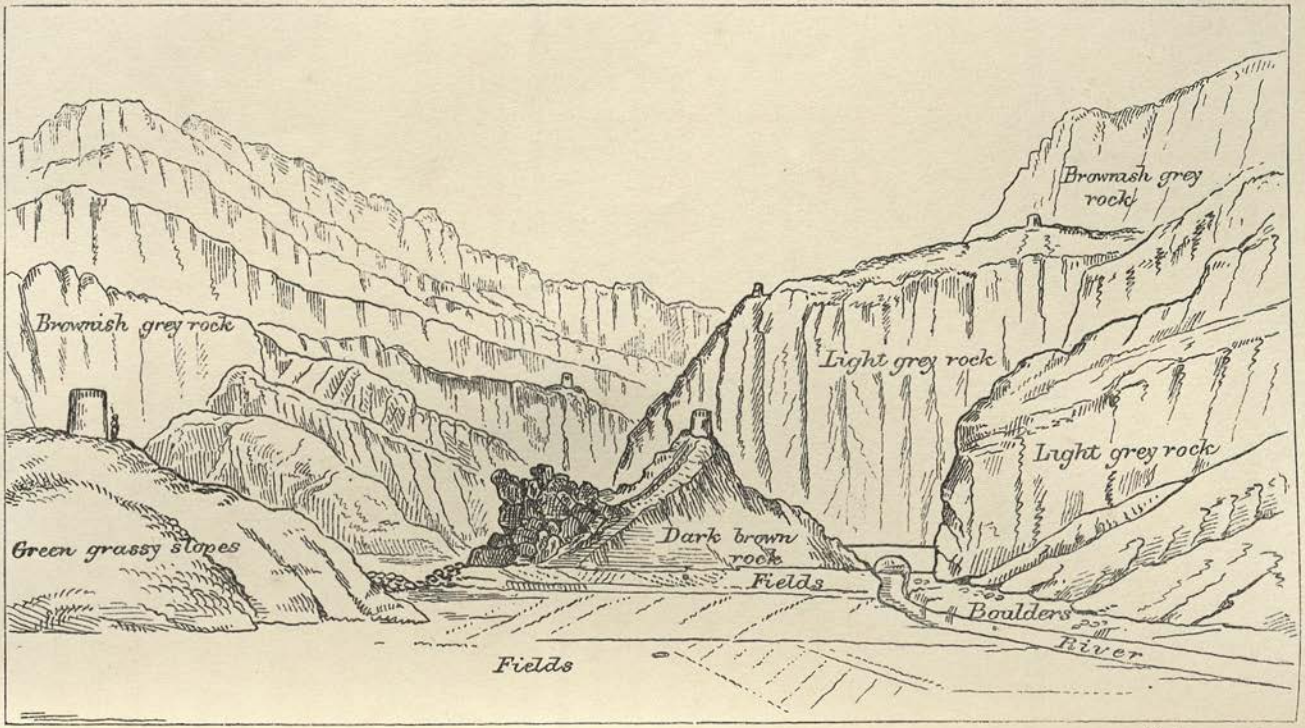
II. ARGHAWAN SHAH GATE OF KULLAT. [*To face page 56.*



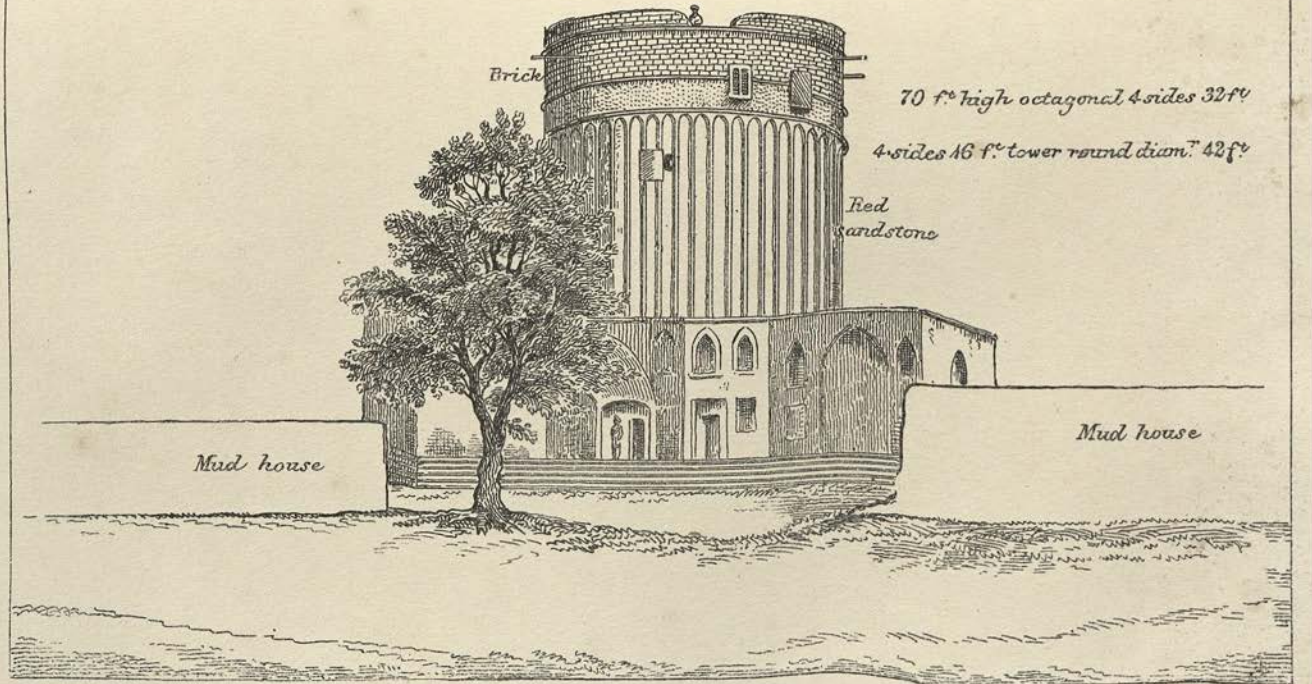
II. SOUTH FACE OF KULLAT-Y-NADIR. [*To face page* 56.



II. NAFTA ENTRANCE TO KULLAT. [*To face page 57.*



II. ARGHAWAN SHAH ENTRANCE OF KULLAT. [To face page 55.



II. MUKBURRA-Y-NADIR IN KULLAT [To face page 51.

spur, and descends by a bad stony path to another stream, which uniting with that from Churm, goes on to Archingoon.

From this the road ascends steeply by a narrow path over a slippery earthy hillside, and again descends over similar ground to another stream two miles on. Going over yet another spur, the valley in which is the village of Senai is reached. The village itself is a mile further up in a narrow glen, and is said to consist of 100 houses. The water of this valley also drains to Archingoon.

The road now goes down this valley for five-eights of a mile, then over a spur for half a mile, and down another valley for three-quarters of a mile, from which it ascends very steeply over earth-covered slopes for three-quarters of a mile to the crest of the Ahdahee pass. From thence the road is exceedingly steep, and owing to the narrowness of the path is also too dangerous to make riding down it a feat of any profit. It is also commanded by an isolated hill with scarped sides, which overhangs the river and affords a splendid site for a fort.

Ighdaleek, eighteen miles from Kullat, is a queer little village, surrounded by four mud walls, and situated in a small glen, so completely commanded by all the hills round that one has almost a birdseye view of it. The level space is quite taken up with gardens and fields, and a very fine stream rushes down the centre of the glen. Both from above and below it is approached through the most difficult defiles, the cliffs rising from the upper one to a height of not less than 1,000 feet sheer. There are now about forty houses of Toorks and Koords, but there have been more, 100 souls having been carried off four years ago by an "alaman*" of

* Predatory band or expedition of Toorkmuns.

Toorkmuns who attacked the village, carried off this number and all the cattle of the place. On hearing this, I much wondered they had not at once moved on to the site at top of the pass mentioned above, which it would be quite beyond the power of any Toorkmuns to attack. The headman agreed that it was a splendid site for a village, but the water was a little farther off *i.e.* about a quarter of a mile. Very apathetic these people; if having one-third of their number carried off does not rouse them into taking such a patent precaution what will? It is said that the silk manufactures of striped pieces for coats and tartan sheets, are better made here than elsewhere in the Khanate, and so I bought a couple as specimens. The latter I have described as resembling some of our Scotch tartans. The former are sometimes very pretty, red being always the predominant colour. The two I bought consist, in one case of a red stripe, and then a pretty green, and then a mixture of red, white, and black, with two narrow black stripes on either side; in the other, of a black stripe with red piping in centre, then a red with a black centre, then yellow and white stripe, which brightens it all up. The prices are absurdly low, being two shillings a yard.

The main range above Igdaleek is called the Koh Huzar-Musjeed, the same name as it bears on the other side, from a high peak of that name, said to be above Ratkan. The crest of this range is said to abound in fine pastures (aulang) with plenty of water, and there is a path which, though bad, is practicable for mules from Ighdaleek to Ratkan, distance about 12 fursucks or 50 miles.

From Ighdaleek the road goes for an hour up a narrow earthy glen, ascends easily (except the last 200 yards,

which were very steep), over earth to the Gurdan Tootluk; it then descends into, and ascends from, two more small valleys, the first named Tootluk, and at last descends in two hours to the mouth of the Durbund Khakista, the water of whose river drains to Khemabad. Having entered this defile, the road goes up it for nearly an hour, over huge boulders, passing by positions of great strength, particularly at a part 30 feet wide, where a wall 15 feet high has been erected across, and where towers on both sides command the entrance. Beyond the wall, there is a succession of four or five little glens filled with trees and connected with each other by narrow defiles. In the last and largest of these valleys is the pretty village of Khakista, containing thirty families of Koords. The whole of this is a most delicious secluded spot, and the scenery, a mixture of grandeur and peaceful beauty, is still on such a small scale as to make one long to lay it out a bit, open out the trees here, place a grotto on that rock, clear the view of that little waterfall, and erect a small white temple above amid that dark green foliage.

It appears, however, that even this little paradise is not free from the visits of those devils the Toorkmuns, who attacked it last year, when it was only by a timely retreat to the higher hills that the inhabitants were saved from a greater loss than that of all their cattle.

After leaving this the defile opens out a little, but is still crowned by cliffs of indescribable grandeur as far as a place called Char-rah, where two valleys meet, and whence a road goes over the hills to Kardeh, and thence to Mushudd. From this there is a steep ascent by a narrow and stony path to the top of the Kotul Laeen, followed by an equally bad descent to that village, which I make to be under sixteen miles. It contains fifty

houses of Koords, and is situated in the same sort of small opening in the hills, closed above and below by frightful defiles, as all the villages met with on this road have been. I was to have taken on a dozen sowars from this place with me, but as they were not ready, I determined to push on to the next village, in order the better to divide the remaining distance to Durraguz. Accordingly, much to the disgust of the sowars I had with me, we moved on at once, ascending for one and a half hours, by a road at first easy though stony, but afterwards getting gradually worse and worse, till near the top the road ascends by a very steep stony zig-zag track to the summit of the Kotul-y-Tirgaun. It then descends for one and a half hours, at first quite as bad as the ascent, but then gradually improving, to an encampment of Koords near a spring of good water, whence to the village of Tirgaun, is one and a half miles, thus making the distance travelled on this day (14th) not far short of twenty-five miles.

I did not go into the village of Tirgaun (which is situated in a little *cul-de-sac* to the left of the road, and was said to consist of only ten or twelve houses of Koords), but went into a small mill near the mouth of the Dahna-y-Tirgaun. There I found company, and as there was no place beyond it till Durraguz was reached, and it was said to be unsafe to go outside the "Dahna" without escort, I determined to stay here.

The glen was so narrow, that at four the sun had gone. I was amused by the history of two of the villagers, who had just come back from Khiva, having been released by order of the mighty "Oroos." Poor devils, I don't wonder at the prestige Russia has on this border, because if one Toorkmun can attack two Persians, and one Russian can eat five Toorkmuns, it is evident they are worthy of great respect.

They had been slaves for four years, and had only come back this year. I think they had benefited by their experience, and were looked on by their brethren with considerable respect, as having been through the rough and disagreeable experience which it might be their own lot next to undergo; much, in fact, as one small boy whose flogging has yet to come, looks on another whose ordeal is over.

From this point there are two roads to Durraguz, one over the hills to the left, goes by Zungalanee, and is the safest, but the most difficult, there being many ascents and descents. The other goes outside the various dahnas direct to Durraguz. I imagine from Baker's saying he began his road by ascending, that he took the first named road.

Below Tirgaun the road is not very bad for ten minutes, but then comes the defile of this name, which is really frightful. For twenty minutes we floundered about from boulder to boulder, enjoying no doubt something of the excitement of the chamois, but, alas! lacking his agility. Every step it seemed to become worse, and I despaired of ever getting the mules over with whole limbs, yet they accomplished it. On either side rose cliffs of rocks straight out of the bed, each dovetailing into the one behind, and offering, as all these defiles do, positions of impregnable strength. The defile opens then and is easier for the next ten minutes, after which the open valley begins; after going down this for five minutes the road leaves the stream to wind on amid desolate depopulated glens and hideous defiles till it emerges into the plains to fertilize the fields of the devils who have caused all the ruin above, and taking to the hills, goes over several spurs into different small glens, one named Shahtoot, all draining to the north. These glens

have water in them, and all might be cultivated were there a strong government on this frontier. After three hours thus ascending and descending, the fine valley of Zungalanee is reached. Here a noble mountain stream, thirty feet broad and three feet deep, rushes past through a beautiful valley with acres and acres of good soil, but without a living soul in it. There is water enough and land enough along this stream, from the time it leaves the defiles till it reaches the plains, and is lost in the desert, to support in comfort not under 50,000 souls, and yet not one ever ventures here, except as we were doing, to hurry through with eyes and ears and senses all open for the slightest trace of the fell Toorkmun. Here and there were old ruined towers, and in one place I saw signs of an abandoned village, each marking eras in the annals of this country. First before the Toorkmuns had become a scourge to the land, a smiling valley with fields and flocks and signs of life everywhere; then the same valley with fewer fields, more ruined houses and more towers of refuge, and now even the latter had fallen, and so the swift stream carried its clear limped water to be lost in the desert, or wasted in carrying life to Toorkmun dogs.

It is really sad to see a magnificent country deserted like this; it has the finest soil and most water of any district I have seen in Persia, yet no attempt is made to colonize it. The excuse given—Khowf-y-Toorkmun*—is no excuse at all, for the Persian Government should be quite able to arrange that no Toorkmuns could live within raiding distance without giving up their habits of kidnapping.

The river is crossed by a deep ford, and as the current even when I crossed was very swift, it must be impass-

* Fear of the Toorkmuns.

able after rain. It drains an immense tract of country, as all the streams from Laeen westward fall into it before it gets to the plains. I afterwards crossed its head waters in the glen between the Allaho-Akbur and the Maidan-y-Khoonee on the Durraguz-Koochan road.

About half a mile above the ford the road through the mountains joined the one I was following, whence it goes over open hills ascending easily for three-quarters of an hour, and then descends over the same sort of country for one hour and a quarter to the deserted fort of Sain; then on, passing a queer little fort on a hill named Koomuch Khoor, through low deserted valleys with good soil and water, to cross a low ridge which shuts out Durraguz from view. After quitting the ridge the road goes on level in one hour and three-quarters from Sain. The tract of country between Sain and the valley in which the village of Mahamadabad is situated is said to be very dangerous, as the Toorkmuns find good grazing and water in the valleys, and hiding behind the tall reeds emerge when least expected. My party, however, got through all right, although there must even then have been Toorkmuns on the look out, as two men were carried off just behind us. In this space, as I heard afterwards, of about five miles, I counted over 150 towers of refuge, a pretty good proof that its reputation was fully deserved.

On the left of the road above Zungalanee, I was informed there was a fine tableland five miles long by two miles broad, which is called the Tukht-y-Shah, and affords excellent pasture ground.

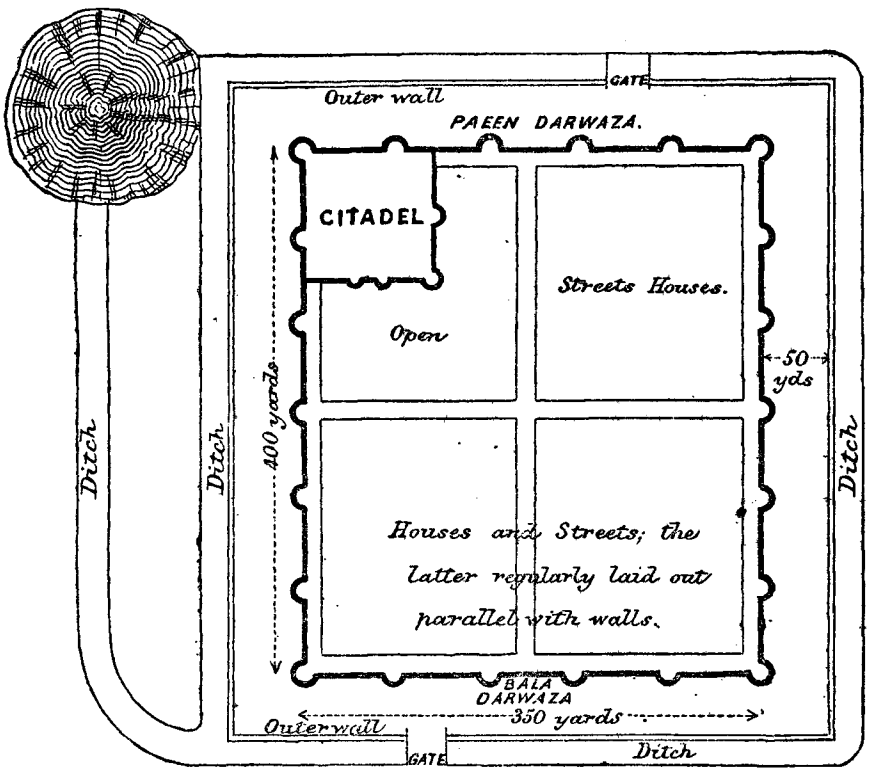
On arriving at Mahamadabad I found no one to receive me, although I had sent on the order of the Wulee hours before by the short road. On inquiring, I

was told the Khan was sleeping, and no one in the town was bold enough to awake him. I, after waiting two hours outside the gate, went off, found a place for my camp, and proceeded to make myself comfortable.

At three an individual came to say he had come to take me to my manzil. I told him to tell the Khan I was very comfortable where I was and couldn't think of moving now. Then came deputation after deputation, each rising in rank, and all used their most persuasive arguments, and all swore the Khan would kill them and burn their fathers if I did not come. But I said I was extremely obliged to the Khan, and if they had come when I was being grilled in the sun, they would have been welcome, I would not say more welcome; but their arrival would have been more happily timed. Now, having been grilling for ten long hours in an orient sun, it was necessary that the Furrungee should bathe, should eat, and finally—Inshalla!—should sleep. At length they came with their last argument. It was not safe to remain outside, the Khan could not be answerable if I remained. This was enough; I made it a rule to do whatever the authorities wished in this respect, and so I went into the town.*

* After I had got completely settled in my new quarters, an individual came to me from the Khan to see what I wanted; of course they did not understand why any one should travel and "draw troubles" on his devoted head for pleasure, and they always seemed to consider more unintelligible that a Colonel should do such things. However, having satisfied my interrogator on this point, he said, "You are an Englishman?" "I have that honour, thank heaven!" I replied. "Then you will want to go to the top of a hill and look at the Toorkmun plain through a telescope?" I inquired what he meant; on which he explained that it had always been the rule with all Englishmen who came here to do this, but as I ascertained that the only result of this manœuvre was seeing through a glass a hazy plain with some black specks on it, and could not afford the time for such mild amusement, I declined the trip. I wished very

The village of Mahamadabad, which is the chief place in the Khanate of Durraguz, of which latter name there is no town, is contained within double walls, which enclose about 1,200 houses; all of the poorest description. There are two gates to the inner wall, one



ROUGH PLAN OF MAHAMADABAD. Scale—12 in. to a mile.

on the south leading to Kooehaun, the other on the north leading to Bairago, and they are connected by a street with trees down the centre, in which are the shops of the place.

much, certainly, to go and really see a Toorkmun camp, but the Khan said that could not be managed, for the old reason which has been ringing in my ears ever since I left Toon, "Khowf-y-Toorkmun."

The former town seems to have occupied a space of 350 yards by 400, and to have been enclosed within a good wall, with towers at the corners, and at every 50 yards, in the curtain, and these fortifications still remain. Probably owing to increase of population, a further space of 50 yards all round has been enclosed, and the north side is surrounded by an ordinary wall and a good broad ditch. In the NW. corner of this enclosed area, is a mound of the height of about 40 feet looking into the citadel, which is simply a portion of the village 100 yards square, marked off. There are two gates, one on the north called Paeen Durwaza, and the Bala Durwaza on the south. There are corresponding gates in the outer wall, a little to one side of each. The only thing remarkable that I discovered in Mahamadabad was the absence of ruins, and the regularity of the streets, these latter being laid out at right angles to the walls, and having two main streets which meet in the centre, coming from the four points of the compass.

Though far from pleased at my reception, I went next day and called on the Khan, and was received by him in a garden half a mile to the south of the village. In the centre of this, on the top of four tiers or terraces of octagonal shape, was raised a tower of the kind called a Koola Furrungee, from its resemblance to a European black hat, whence a good view of the surrounding country was obtained. As I was riding up, I heard a regular fusillade going on, and soon learnt the reason of it; for after we had sat in the room for ten minutes, the Khan proposed going out on the terrace, and there guns being brought him by attendant myrmidons in crimson dressing-gowns and lambswool busbies, he fired frequently and, as it seemed to me, very wildly.

Yet he always apparently managed to hit something, for after every discharge some of the dressing-gown gentlemen rushed among the trees and emerged with small birds of various descriptions. It would not perhaps be fitting in me, as a guest at the moment, to venture to account for the apparent discrepancy between the wildness of the aim and the havoc denoted by the result, and, therefore, I leave the solution of the problem for those who are quick at the art of putting two and two together.

The Khan of this place is neither a very polite nor an amusing individual, but one thing which he said tickled me much, illustrating as it does the emptiness of fame. In talking of two former travellers who lately visited this place, and who, lest their feelings should be wounded, I forbear to indicate more minutely, he had apparently quite forgotten their names, and always mentioned the first comer as "eki" and the second as "eki digar;" saying for instance, "eki" had come and gone shooting; "eki digar," had talked Persian." Sometimes too he varied the denomination of these, by talking of them as "pirar sali" and "par sali;" so I conclude after I have gone, I shall be promoted to be "par sali," vice—advanced to the rank of "pirar sali;" for the present, I must put up with the humble rank of "im sali" I suppose.*

I must say, I was not on the whole impressed with Alayar Khan, and I am sure whatever soreness there may have been at the time at my rude reception, cannot have any weight now. I thought he was intelligent; but his genius seemed rather jerky and unstable. He

* "Eki" means one person, "eki digar" another; "par sali," the last year person, "pirar sali," the year before last person, "im sali," this year person.

talked a great deal of what he was going to do, and expressed a poor opinion of the Toorkmuns; but when I asked him why he did not colonize the magnificent Zungalanee valley, he could only say such was his intention, and poor though his opinion of the Toorkmuns may be, I never saw such mortal dread of these gentlemen as all his arrangements showed.

Long before it was dark, he quitted the garden-house I have mentioned above, and when I suggested it would be a very nice place to sleep in during the hot weather, he turned quite green. When we left we were all huddled into the town, and the gates were shut, though the sun was only just setting. According to his own showing, the whole country round was occupied by roaming bands of Toorkmuns, and even if he had not said so, the very large number of Toorkmun towers alone proved it. The two days I was there, the gates were not opened till nine in the morning.

Alayar Khan, however, has a body of some 1,000 horsemen, worthy of all commendation. Their equipment is the same as that described of the horsemen of the lower part of the Mushudd valley; but these men seem more in hand. They are dressed for the most part in black lambswool busbies, and coats made of the striped Khorassan silk; they have a most soldier-like appearance, and are extremely well mounted. He can also, he informed me, turn out over 1,000 foot men, but these are of the "catch 'em alive o" description, with which we are familiar on the Indus frontier. His cavalry are, I believe, chiefly mounted on horses captured, or taken as ransom from the Toorkmuns, a supply which though it seems sufficient, must be more or less precarious, and it is therefore a matter of surprise that some arrangement for breeding horses is not come to.

I asked Alayar why he did not do this, but the idea did not take with him, and I suppose as long as this Toorkmun difficulty is not arranged, he will go on as he has done. The system of border defence, though of course not so regularly organized, is much the same in principle as that of the Punjab frontier, viz., a system of reprisals. It is a bad system, I think, as neither side can ever settle down as long as it goes on.

The Khanate of Durraguz is smaller than that of Kullat-y-Nadir; the southern boundary goes from that of the latter along the Koh Huzar Musjeed range, round the head of the Zungalanee river, which is there called the Rood-y-Kibkan, north of the Maidan Khoonee pass, and thence to Kulta Cheenar. Whence it takes the crest of the Zurreen Koh ridge, to the exit of the Mahamadabad stream, beyond which there are a few settlements in the Attruk, held on a precarious tenure. It then runs on and meets the boundary of Kullat, whence the east bounds may be said to run up the spur which divides the drainage of Laeen from that of Zungalanee. In this tract, as well as in Kullat, there are some magnificent tracts of country with plenty of water and very fine grazing, so that there is no doubt much might be done to improve it agriculturally, while it would afford great facilities for the rearing of a splendid breed of horses and mules.

From Mahamadabad I got the following bearings. The Allaho Akbur pass, 217°. The main range, or rather perhaps the Allaho Akbur spur of that range, stretches from 143° to 268°. The road to Durringa, bears 295°, and that place is said to be about thirty miles distant, beyond which to Annow, one of the Ukhal Toorkmun villages, is from sixteen to eighteen miles, the road is said to be quite practicable.

The Zurreenkoh stretches from 302° to 43° across the north of the valley, the fort being not more than three miles distant. A low ridge runs out from Karajukhar hills which bears 140° to a bearing of 112°, and a glen called Talkeedurra, and a pasturage named Pad Alung, bear 115°. The road from Kullat bears 125°, and the valley is quite shut in on the east, by a ridge running north and south, which is continuous with that which comes down from Karajukhar. One mile off, on a bearing of 320°, is the village of Arteean. Nowkundan, said to be a large village about six miles off, is on a bearing of 300°. The river, whose bed passes Mahamadabad to the east, is joined below that place by the river of Durringa, the head of which is said to be a long way off in Koochan territory.*

* The route from Daragoz to Mushudd. As far as Mankoh the route is the same as that I followed, from this the road follows that to Kuchan for three miles, when the Mushudd road goes off to the right, and ascending a valley, crosses over the main range by the pass, and descends to the village Yeshagi, whence to Mushudd it goes down the valley by Ratkan, Chinaran, &c.

CHAPTER III.

DURRAGUZ TO SHAHROOD

On the morning of the 18th August, as soon as we could get out of the town (not till 9 A.M.) I commenced my march to Koochan, without waiting for the horsemen who were to have come with me.

The road goes out to the SE., and in a mile passes the old site of the chief village of the Khanate. It then goes between low hills for two miles, when it passes the village of Pai Kulla half a mile on the right, and two miles further comes to the village of Khulk Vurdee, that of Chubeshlee being about one mile further on to the left frontier. One mile to the right of Pai Kulla is Kulla Abbas, and one mile still further to the right Saadabad, Kotallee being three miles further off still on the right.

From Khulk Vurdee the road goes over an open undulating plain for four miles to the village of Kulla Meena, which is one mile off the regular road to the left. Here, as it was now past eleven, I determined to halt for breakfast and wait till my escort came up; so I got under the shade of a really magnificent plane tree and bivouacked. The villagers were extemely civil at this place, and brought me bunches of splendid grapes which were most welcome, as from the long absence of green food with my meals I used to long always for the grapes which at this season are nearly everywhere

procurable. About one the escort turned up, in twos and threes, till some twenty-five had assembled, and I was glad to find they were a particularly fine body of men.

As the sun was very hot I didn't start again till 3 P.M., when we went on. We had got a little off the main road by going to Kulla Meena, and I was afraid that in trying to regain it we should find ourselves in a tract where it would be difficult for the mules to go; but as it turned out the line we took by the villages of Aktash and Kolyell was actually shorter and easier than the regular road, which joined about a mile up the ascent by a steep gradient. The whole road to the top of the Allaho Akbur Pass is very easy, and except a few short bits, where it could easily be improved, is practicable for artillery now. Near the top of the ascent, which is a little over three miles and takes one and a half hours to accomplish, the road goes under some very high precipitous cliffs which completely command it, but the crest could not long be held by an enemy, as the whole of this range is so practicable everywhere as to offer but little difficulty in turning any position taken up on it. A little below the actual crest is a tower held by some Durraguzees, but, from its faulty site, I should say it cannot be of much use.

From the crest of the ridge of Allaho Akbur I got a fine view of the Durraguz plain, and saw what I had taken for the Zurreen Koh was in reality a small tributary spur of that range, which rose up much higher and parallel to it. I also made out that all the drainage of the valley as far west as Chibushlee and Meena, ran out through a defile I had passed in the road to Mahamadabad, and draining eventually into the Zungalanee river, while all to the west of this goes

out by the defile which leads to Ab-i-Vurd. Beyond the Karajakhar ridge was still another low ridge called the Kirrik Kaz between it and the Attuk.

Before descending finally the road passes over a low neck of the ridge, after which it goes down easy, but rather stony, to a very curious series of little rocky projections which rise straight out of the ground to a height of two or three feet, and run close together and parallel to each other right across the hill. These of course make the road here very difficult, and the interstices would have to be filled up with earth before artillery could get over it. On every one of these little ridges and all along them close together, travellers have at various times erected little piles of stones of all shapes and sizes, and on looking back at the steep ascent with these heaps of stones I could not help calling to mind the story in the "Arabian Nights," where the hero is called back at each step by the stones strewed about the hill he is ascending.

From this the road goes down pretty steeply and is much encumbered by stones, the last part is especially bad, going through a narrow defile with cliffs close on either hand, and the road lying over masses of sheet rock: all of which makes it quite impracticable for artillery in its present state. Then the road goes alongside the stream, ascending imperceptibly to the south of Mean Koh about one mile on.

On reaching a point on the crest of the Allaho Akbur pass from which I could see the valley below, I was much astonished to find that it drained to the eastward. From the map in my possession, which was the latest one of Col. Walker, it seemed that once you had crossed this pass one would enter a tract draining towards Mushudd; but this is not the case, as the Mean

Koh river, here called the Rood-y-Gibkan, the head waters of which, I may add, are not less than fifteen miles to the west, runs to the NE., and going through a narrow defile joins the waters of the Zungalanee river, which I crossed on the march to Durraguz. There is a road which goes from Mean Koh to the Zungalanee, then over the hill between it by the line Baker's party came and the Tirjaun river, whence to Kullat it follows the line I had come by. This is probably the most direct route between Kullat and Koochan.

The village of Mean Koh is an odd little place, situated, as its name implies, between hills and perched on a low isolated hillock. It has only about thirty inhabitants, Koords, but there is an immense deal of tobacco cultivation for so small a place. It also has a great abundance of water, and there seems no reason, except want of population, why every part of the ground that could be got at by water, should not be cultivated.

On the march to-day, an individual named Roostum Beg attached himself to me, and said he was a servant of the English for ever, having served "Cornel Fikkur" (Col. Baker), and he recounted to me numerous stories of the hills the Colonel had climbed, the game he had shot, the places he had been to, and the things he possessed. With regard to the latter, I may defend myself from any imputation of inquisitiveness on the subject of Colonel Baker's belongings, by appealing to any one who has ever heard a Persian roll out a yarn; when he has an attentive audience no helping is required.

We got off early, about 3.30, but as there was a lovely moon, and so while we have lost but little as regards view of the country, we gained the cool hours of early morning, I was very glad to leave for I could get no sleep all night. Not far from me was a woman wailing, not

very loudly, but it seemed to me very broken-heartedly. She went on again and again repeating some name—I think it was Ahmud—saying "Oh, oh, Ahmud, Ah-m-ud," then bursting into a paroxysm of grief. Poor wretch! I suppose he had been good to her, and now he was gone from her, and her cries struck a chord in my own heart, which made it very trying to listen the long still night through.

The road goes along the valley, gradually ascending for three miles to a small hamlet, just beyond which a defile is entered, where another stream joins from the proper right, up which there is a road to Mushudd. It then turns to the right up a little valley, and presently commences the ascent of the Kotul Maidan Khoonee, which is generally very easy, over open rounded hills covered with magnificent grazing, the roadway being over earth. The ascent does not take more than half an hour, and then an undulating plain covered with grass is reached, which is called the "Field of Blood," why I don't know, for it looks very peaceful, and has numerous flocks grazing on it. After a bit of level of three-quarters of a mile, the descent commences. It is very easy at first, but gradually becomes worse, till towards the end it is very rocky, steep and difficult, and would have to be much improved for artillery. The whole is about two and a quarter miles. At first there is no view of the general lie of the country beyond, but towards the bottom one sees the Tawarikh valley, and here again I was surprised. I thought that although the Allaho Akbur ridge was evidently not the main range, this clearly was, and that of course I should now find the drainage going towards Mushudd. Not finding this the case, however, I asked Mr. Roostum, who has a pretty fair knowledge of the country. He said, "The river of Tawarikh

goes to Koochan." "Yes," I said; "but beyond, does not the river drain to Mushudd?" "To Mushudd?" he replied, quite surprised; "no, it goes on to Shirwan." Here was another surprise; I always had an idea that Koochan was at the head of the drainage of Mushudd, instead of which I find that it drains to Shirwan, and then to the Attruk.

There is thus no doubt that this little stream at Tawarikh, is justly entitled to be considered the chief source of the Attruk river, though which of the four streams which join each other near this is the actual source, I had not time to determine, but I am inclined to think that which comes from the east, from the direction of the hill which is called Koh Tuhmusp, has the best claim.

The village of Tawarikh is very prettily situated in a little valley, surrounded by picturesque mountains and by many trees. It has a good deal of cultivation, but might have much more, as no less than four fairly plentiful streams discharge their water into it. From this there are two roads, one down the defile of the river, the other over the hill. I chose the last as being the shortest, and found it very easy the whole way to Myree, a small village where I halted for breakfast about eleven.

This place has about 100 houses, with an abundant supply of good water, but there are no gardens round it or trees, and I was consequently obliged to stay in the open. From Myree, a hill called Koh Kampharee bore 200°, and it is situated in the ridge beyond Sooltan Maidan. The village of Furkhan, said to have 50 houses, bore 192°, two miles distant. The head of the watershed between Koochan and Mushudd was said to be at a spot called Eek, about eighteen miles off.

After having satisfactorily accomplished the important duty of breakfasting, I again started about two, and was severely punished for not going on at once, by having the sun blazing right in my eyes the whole way. From Myree I sent back the greater part of the escort, keeping only some five men, among whom Roostum was one.

The road first goes down a ravine for two miles, in a direction 250° to the village of Kulla-Agha-Said, when the main valley of Koochan is reached; whence the road is over a fine open undulating valley for some six miles; the last part into the town of Koochan being through an unbroken sea of vineyards.

On arrival I found that the sowar I had sent on had of course not arrived, and so there was some delay in informing the authorities, but I had afterwards sent on the trustworthy Roostum, and therefore had not to wait long ere a portly individual with an appearance something between a French Marshal and a *chef de cuisine*, came with a host of furrashes and showed me to a very nice house, all the way pouring forth a string of welcomes from his master.

While waiting outside I took advantage of the opportunity to get some bearings to the surrounding points of interest. The Koh Shahjuhan bore 250°, Koh Mahamad Beg 164°, K. Sarakhor 180°, ten to twelve miles distant, head of the Koochan valley 130°. A road to Durraguz 55° (more direct than the one I had come), Koh Isfuzar on the range to the north 330°, road to Shirwan, 302°, finally I noticed the town of Koochan was completely commanded by a hill to the north-east.

Next day I went to see the chief of this district, by name Meer Hoosen Khan, by title Shoojah-oo-dowlah, and

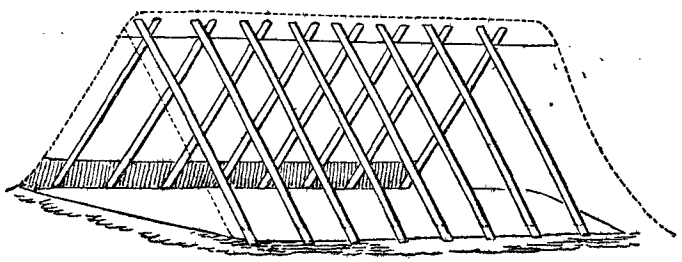
he received me in a tent in a garden, explaining that he almost lived in a tent now, as the earthquakes were so frequent as to make a house dangerous. He is an elderly-looking man of about forty-five, of sallow complexion, and grave dignified manners, and with an appearance of considerable intelligence which his after conversation did not belie. He was very kind and pleasant in his manner, and, as I was pleased to find, not in the least inane in his conversation. There was a prince of the Kujjur* family staying with him, by name Mahamad Hashem Mirza, who has some employment connected with the shrine at Mushudd, and who struck me as one of the best looking and most gentlemanly-mannered men I have seen anywhere. Lastly, the chief's son, by a Toorkmun lady, Abool Hussun, made up the trio of my companions. This young man had a heavy look, with the sort of eyes that look as if the owner had been crying, and it is strange how much looks belie people, for Abool Hussun, who looked as if he would burst into a flood of tears if his mother spoke harshly to him, had, when the Shah imprisoned his father, a few months ago, gone off to the Toorkmuns, and was on the point of bringing 10,000 Akhuls down on the garrison which had been sent from Mushudd. Altogether I passed here about the pleasantest visit I have had in Persia.

I must not forget to mention that Meer Hoosen Khan sent an Arab for me to ride, with the handsome trappings which had been presented to him by the Shah, the saddle being covered with a velvet saddlecloth beautifully embroidered, which I afterwards learnt was Resht work. The headstall, reins, surcingle and crupper,

* The tribe to which the Shah belongs.

were covered with plates, of either gold or silver gilt, of the same pattern as is common enough among the Koords, but these were far the handsomest I saw in Persia, or indeed have ever seen anywhere. The horse was really a fine animal, a pure Arab, but I was so impressed with the dignity of the source from which he had come, that I did not like lightly to try his paces.

Koochan is certainly about the most ruinous place I have seen, and when the reader remembers that every city in Persia seems to be nearly in the last stage of dissolution, the force of this remark will be appreciated.



At least one half of the old city has been absolutely abandoned, and is now a series of shapeless mounds; and of the other half, one half of the houses are tumbling down. Viewed from the top of a mound on which the citadel formerly stood, the place has a most desolate appearance, which is not relieved by the beauty of any single building. All the houses are mud and nearly all flat-roofed, though a new kind of building has lately come into vogue. It is said to stand the earthquakes better, and consists of a tent roof with no walls, erected of poles tied to each other, and to a ridge pole, the ends

buried in the earth, and the whole covered with a layer of earth, as shown by the dotted lines in the diagram. Whether this is effectual or not, I cannot say, but the people seem to have faith in it. It would be useless to attempt any description of Koochan, or its walls, for the whole, now a mass of ruins, may cease to exist at the next earthquake; and as to its gates, besides those made by man, it has, as a Persian friend wittily remarked, several which may be termed "earthquake gates." (Darwaza-i-zilzila.)

There is a very wretched bazaar here, with scarcely anything in it beyond the ordinary country produce, but there are said to be a good number of copper pots and woollen stockings made. Outside the town for more than a mile all round the place is one vast vineyard, and it seems almost as if nothing else was grown; but beyond this radius there is a large extent of wheat cultivation.

To the north-east of the town is a hill rising about 150ft. above it, at a distance of 2,500 or 3,000 yards, which is called Nadir-i-Tuppeh, and is justly celebrated as the spot where that great conqueror was assassinated while besieging Koochan during one of its frequent fits of rebellion. This hill completely commands the town at the above range, a fact of little importance, however, as it is the last place in the world able to make any resistance.

The town has about 2,000 houses, inhabited by Zuffuranloo Koords, who are the ruling race, Toorks and Persians. It is situated close under the last slopes of the hills on the north, but there is an immense stretch of splendid land to the south.

The valley of Koochan, or Koochoon as the people call it, I reckon, from its head to past Shirwan, cannot

be less than sixty miles long; and I should say the breadth of the culturable ground, which slopes down from the hills on either hand, could not be under fifteen or sixteen miles. The area of this tract, therefore, would be about 900 square miles; and when we come to consider that the whole of it seems to be composed of fine culturable soil, and that the grand mountains on the north and south pour down an abundant supply of water, it is easy to see what a country this might become under a better government and with more people.

Not that I have anything to say against the Shoojah-oo-Dowlah, who seemed to me one of the most intelligent and best governors I had seen in Persia, and who I afterwards learnt was certainly much beloved by his people. Therefore, if Koochan, fine district though it be, might be finer, the fault does not lie with Meer Hoosen Khan, but with the accursed Persian system of mingled tyranny and imbecility. It would be impossible for the best man under the sun to make his district all that it might be, if he were under the orders of the imbecile vapourers who form the ministry at Tehran; for if he did, it would soon be said that he was becoming too powerful, and he would be straightway plundered if they dared to plunder him, or if not, induced to pay heavy bribes to be let alone.

The boundaries of the Khanate may be said to be the crest of the fine ranges on the north and south; on the east I should take the watershed betwen Mushudd and Koochan as the probable boundary; and on the west, the Shoojah-oo-Dowlah's territory extends down the Attruk valley to about twelve miles below Shirwan. The length is therefore about ninety miles, and the breath about forty miles, the area about 3,500

square miles, that is, an area nearly equal to Devonshire and Cornwall.

It is very difficult to form any idea of the probable population of any district in Persia, more especially after merely passing through it in the way I did. The Shoojah-oo-Dowlah told me he could call out 30,000 armed men, which would give a population of probably 150,000 souls. I am, however, inclined on the whole not to put it higher than 100,000, which gives about thirty to the square mile.

When I was at Koochan, nearly all the horsemen of the place were away on the Toorkmun frontiers, but in the guard that was sent with me on my departure, I saw enough to convince me that the standard of efficiency which I had seen in Kullat and Durraguz was also kept up here. The number maintained was said to be 1,000.

Staying at Koochan on the 20th and 21st, during which time I was most kindly and hospitably treated, I left for Shirwan on the 22nd, getting off in the small hours. The road led straight down the valley to the north-west on the right bank of the Attruk. At one and a half miles we passed Ishmabad, and at five miles the village of Jafurabad, which was said to have lost seventy people in the earthquake that happened three years ago, when a good part of Koochan was laid in ruins, and eight other villages almost totally destroyed, so that notwithstanding their fine valley the inhabitants have not got it quite their own way. Five and a half miles further we passed Faroch, one mile off, Yam, a large village four miles, and Korghab, two miles off, all on the north of the road.

Still on down the valley for four miles, when we came to another group of villages; viz., Barghar, half

a mile; Nuzzuffabad, two miles; Sehgoombaz, three miles; Khairabad, five and a half miles; and Merwan, seven miles on the right; the last being in the hills. At about nineteen miles from Koochan we came to Faizabad, where I found another escort waiting to take me on; and I stopped to have some breakfast outside the village, which did not look inviting enough to tempt me to enter it.

Going on from this place we continued down the valley, passing a hamlet called Boorzilabad at the twentieth mile, and at the twenty-fourth mile we passed the village and fort of Dewin, one mile to the left. It is said to have 100 houses, and the fort is situated on a small isolated mound about 100 feet above the village, but it is commanded to the west by a low ridge which runs out into the valley from the main range. One mile further we passed the village of Sekaura on the right, situated under the hills; and three miles on came to the small hamlet of Baghal, containing some ten houses; and at two miles from this, to the village of Allahabad, situated between a large mound and the last spur of the hills, and possessing large gardens. Five miles further on we reached Shirwan. I noticed that the low ridge mentioned above as commanding the village of Dewin runs to the west, parallel with the main range right up to Shirwan. From the north of Shirwan the hills become low, and also to the west of the Koh Shahjuhan on the south. Beyond Shirwan, both ranges close in and end the fine open valley we have been traversing.

Arrived at this place, I was met by a chief of the Shoojah-oo-Dowlah, and conducted through a busy street abounding with coppersmiths to my quarters, which were in a large but dilapidated enclosure belonging to

the Khan. I was given a very nice clean room looking out on to what might once have been a pretty garden. After a short conversation, the chief left me alone, and directed his "furrashbashee"* to look after my wants. As usual, the first thing I asked for was water to bathe, the second grapes.

Shirwan is a much more respectable looking place than Koochan, and though trees are wanting in the landscape, the site, surrounded as it is by many-tinted hills, is very pretty.

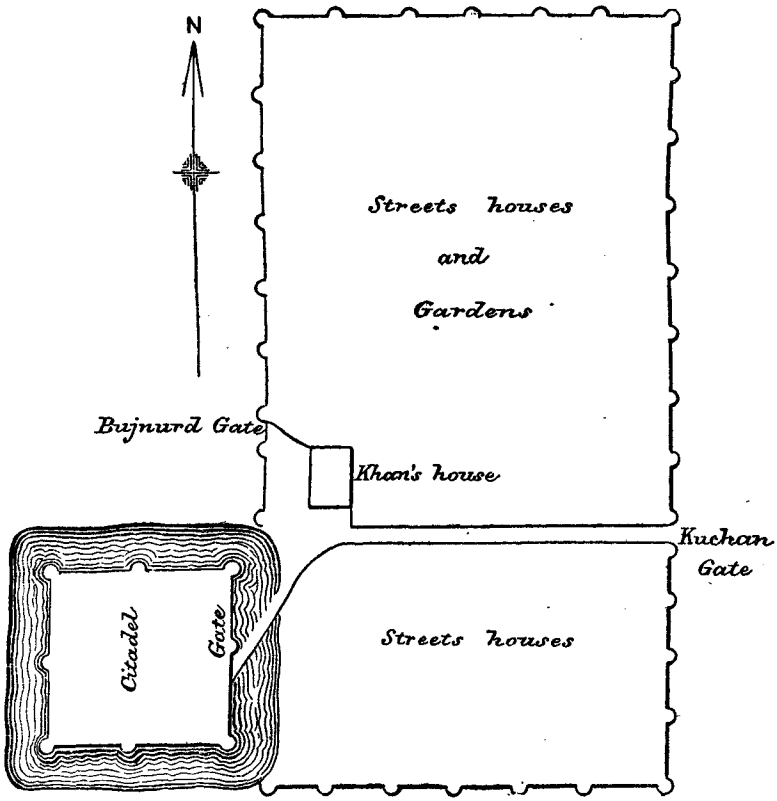
The town has about 300 houses, and is an oblong about 600 yards by 300 yards, and is surrounded by a strong high wall, which is loopholed, but with a very dilapidated banquette, and without a proper communication all round. There are two gates—the Koochan and Bujnoord Durwazas—and there is one good street, which leads from the first-named gate to the west to the Khan's house; the rest are all irregular and narrow. At the south-west corner there is a mound about 100 feet high, and with a diameter of about 200 yards at the base, on which is built the citadel, which completely commands the whole of the town, but which is itself also under the command of the hills on the south.

About half the space enclosed in the walls is a mass of ruins, the cause of which is, however, not earthquakes, as elsewhere in this valley, but the usual Persian apathy. A larger part of the remainder is taken up by gardens and open spaces, covered with filth.

The valley to the north of Shirwan comes round to the west with a sweep, the hills being about four miles

* Chief Furrash.

off. From the south to the west the hills approach close to the town. Two miles to the north is a famous Zeearut,* and the river of Zeristan joins the



ROUGH PLAN OF SHIRWAN. Scale—12 in. to 1 mile.

Attruk. The boundary of the Koochan Khanate is said to be at Abdowa, about eight miles below this place.

The house I was in was, for a Persian dwelling, very

* A place of pilgrimage.

tolerable. Of course, according to our ideas, there is not a great deal of comfort in any Persian house, but if the difference in the climate be taken into consideration, there is much in their abodes, and, I may add, something in their habits, from which we in India might gather hints. Among other items, I think the Persian ceilings might well be adopted as an improvement to the abominable "chut" * of India, and their plan of having a number of niches in their walls would take off much of the awful deadness of the whitewashed walls of that country.

On the 23rd I again got off early. Leaving the town by the Bujnurd gate, just north of the citadel, the road led out nearly due west, and then turned more south over an open plain for two miles to the river Attruk, which we forded. Thence we went along the left bank to the village of Hoosenabad in two miles and a half. This place has fine groves and vineyards. Going beyond this for half a mile, the road now turned more south (214°), and continued so for two miles over easy undulating ground to the foot of the Kotul-y-Khojeh Vardeh. It then turned nearly west (260°), and ascended quite easily to the top in three miles, during the last part of which the road is commanded by bold cliffs on the left, affording a fine position from which to pour a fire on an unwary enemy.

The descent is quite easy, but very stony for a mile and a half, to a mill turned by the water of a fine tributary of the Attruk, which joins it near Gurmekhan. Below the mill is a small village called Baghzuggan.

From thence the road goes due west into a narrow

* Chut is the whitewashed cloth which is stretched across the roof and forms the ceiling.

valley for three miles and a half, then, turning north (295°), the valley opens more and becomes quite level, continuing so for six miles to an imperceptible water-shed. Crossing this, it descends slightly for a mile and a half to a pretty spot, where there was a camp of very wild-looking gentlemen, who said they were Shadeeloos; thence a road went off to Gurmekhan.

Still continuing down this valley for a mile, I reached a point where my guide told me a road went off to the left about twenty miles to a fine mountain district called Roobeea, which had a nomad population of 500 tents, and thence over the Tukht-y-Mirza hill to Isfu-rayeen. All the above tract goes by the name of Huzar Jureeb. Three quarters of a mile beyond the above mentioned point the road comes opposite the ugly village of Chinaran, which has about sixty houses, and is built in a strong position in a little glen to the left of the road. The country about here reminded me much of Abyssinia. From this three miles and a half still down the valley brought us to a place where there was a ruined fort situated in a hollow, and three-quarters of a mile further to two isolated hillocks with traces of forts on the top, and some wretched hovels situated under the scarp of their sides.

Half a mile further the road left the valley, which ran on to Gurmekhan, and turned a little more south, and, going over easy undulating ground, arrived in a mile and a half at the foot of the Kaboob Rummur pass, so called from the white colour of the rocks which form the hill. From this the valley of Bujnurd begins to be visible, the town itself bearing 290°, a grand hill, the Koh Saluch 246°, and another, called Khan Balagh, just above the town. From here I could see where the water of Bujnurd had its exit, and could trace the

spur which runs between it and the drainage of Chinaran. The guide told me the two streams joined about five miles off. Descending from this pass, the ascent and descent of which were both quite easy, we passed through the village of Gamzik, situated on a spur above the valley. It has 100 houses, and there is much cultivation, as well as extensive gardens below. We now entered the valley, and, going over fine and tolerably level ground, came to the town, having accomplished a march of not less than thirty-seven miles.

On arrival, I found that my quarters were not to be in the town, but in a garden some two miles beyond it. So we had to trudge on right through the town, and did not arrive at the garden till after dark, the last half hour seeming ages. When I got in I was so tired with my long ride, right through the day with a blazing sun the whole way, that I could hardly wait till my bed was put up, when I flung myself down and slept as I very seldom do.

Next morning I awoke at hearing talking near my bed, and looking up found a stout gentleman looking at me with an air of such benevolence and kindness that I jumped up and said, "Who are you? but I need not ask, you must be a friend from your looks." He said, "I am your friend and your slave. The Eelkhanee sent me here last night to ask after you, and say he would come and see you in the morning, but seeing you were very tired, I waited till you woke." "Surely," I said, "you have not been waiting all night? You must have 'drawn great trouble on yourself.'" "Not at all; I got on very well by that fire." Then pausing, he said, "At what hour would you be ready to see the Eelkhanee?" "No, no," I replied, "it is my duty

to pay my respects to him first, so if you will tell him I will be with him in a couple of hours." My friend was alarmed at this, saying the Khan had particularly told him not to let me come first, but I said, "All right; I'll make your peace with the Khan, but I could not think of letting him pay me the first visit."

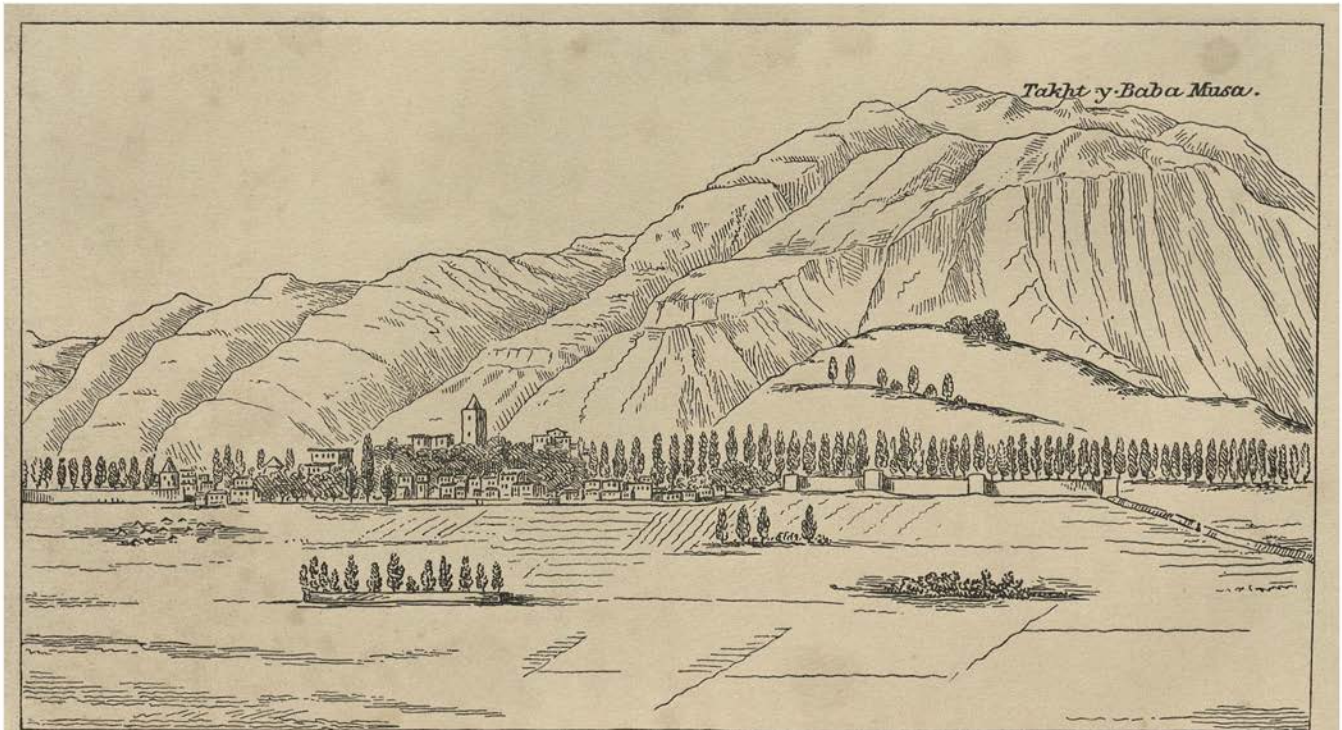
I then got up, put on my undress uniform, which was what I always wore on these occasions, and after a slight refreshment rode over to the garden where the Khan was, which was only about half a mile off.

Arrived there, I found he had prepared a beautiful large tent, laid out with carpets, and had got together all his notables. One of these visits is so like another as to details, that the only variation is to be found in the manner of the host. One does not get much intellectual pabulum from the talk of the generality of Asiatics; though in Persia, I must allow, the conversation is generally far more amusing and intelligent than in India. Sometimes they are flippant, like my friend Alayar Khan; sometimes supercilious, like the Mootawulee Bashee at Mushudd; generally there is a film of bombast, often a soupçon of insolence; sometimes they are "vox et preterea nihil." Therefore, when one meets one of them whose manner, like that of Eelkhanee, is one of most impressive kindness, and who does not obscure his intelligence with any such nonsense as above, one appreciates it the more. Suffice it, therefore, to say, this interview and many others I had with the Eelkhanee passed off most pleasantly. I have seen some more intelligent men in Persia, but I have met no one whose kindness (though I seldom found this wanting) has left a more grateful recollection on me than has that of Yar Michund Khan.

Bujnurd is certainly one of, if not the, prettiest val-

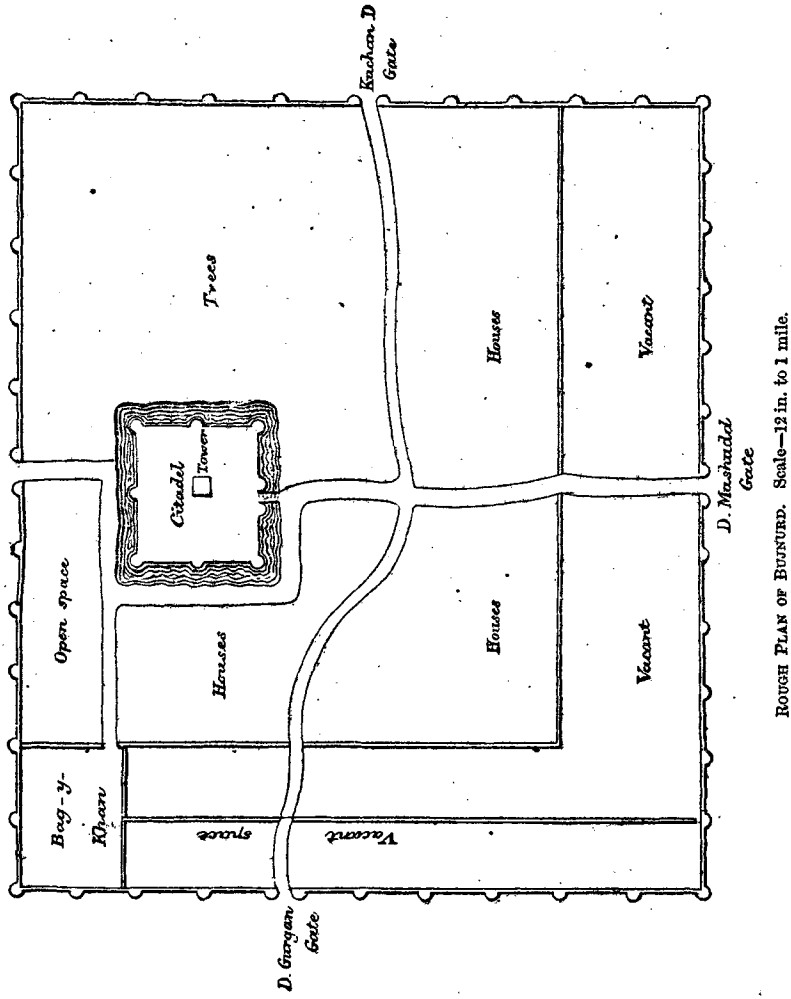
leys I have seen in Persia. It is a small and beautiful plain studded with villages, covered with cultivation and picturesquely sprinkled with gardens and trees, and surrounded by mountains of every variety and description; it only wants water to make it perfect. In fact, it is quite the sort of place I should wish to have for an estate, being just big enough for one thoroughly to overlook it. From any of the surrounding heights one can see all over it quite easily, and its beautiful appearance made me indulge in sundry day dreams, and long to have the laying of it out. There, where the plain is lowest, I would make a beautiful little lake, with islands and temples; here and there on the plain, with studied negligence, I would plant trees in twos and threes and clumps. Then on the hills, which are a trifle too bare, I would have small green thickets at the springs, and with some white mosques and tombs dotted on the hillside. But what is the good of a dream! I only wish I had an artist's pencil that I might lay it all before my readers; in default of which I offer this little sketch, which shows one view of the town from the south-west.

The town of Bujnurd may be described as a square, situated about two miles from the hills to the north, built round a mound on the north side, on which is situated the Eelkhanee's residence, which, as usual, is called the Arg. The place is surrounded on all sides by a very decent wall, which includes a great deal more ground than is taken up by the town, so that on the south and west sides there are large open spaces almost entirely unoccupied, and these are shut off from the inhabited portion by inner walls; and on the west there is a third wall, which runs in a meaningless way from the Bagh-y-Khan to the south, between the outer and



II. BUJNURD, FROM THE S.W. [To face page 96.

inner walls above-mentioned. There are four gates; the Kibla on the north, Koochan on the east, Mushudd



ROUGH PLAN OF BUNJURD. Scale—12 in. to 1 mile.

on the south, and the Goorgan on the west. The citadel is built on a mound about 150 yards square, 100 yards from the north gate, and the ground slopes

from it down to the south. The town is said to contain 1,500 houses, and these are all of mud, and of the usual dilapidated appearance, with flat roofs. There are four main streets: one enters at the Kibla gate, and winds round the western face of the Citadel, and then goes south to the Mushudd gate; another, entering at the Koochan gate, runs irregularly to the west, and has its exit at the Goorgan gate. The town, though surrounded by triple defences, is not capable of offering any resistance, as the walls are, as always in Persia, much out of repair; the water can be cut off, and the place is commanded by high ground to the north. Down part of the street leading to the Arg is a stream of water, and some trees are planted, giving it a cheerful shade.

The only manufactures of Bujnurd are copper pots, and the pretty silk cloths made elsewhere in north Khorassan. Some of these are striped, and some tartans. They also make pretty, but rather gaudy, socks and gloves, both in wools and silks. No carpets are manufactured here, but they can be got readily from the Toorkmuns. From what the Eelkhanee told me, his jurisdiction extends on the east from the Koochan boundary; on the north—

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can,"

seems to settle his frontier; and, as he wittily remarked, "When I am up in the world, I do what I like with the north; and when the Toorkmuns are too strong, I pull in my horns. If I was strong enough, and had the people, I would take the whole country up to the Kuren Dagh, as I have more right to it than any one

else; but now it lies waste, and neither I nor the Toorkmuns dare occupy it." I fancy these remarks apply pretty accurately to the west also, and I believe he has no regular settlement west of Mana, Showghan, and Jahjurm. On the south, his boundary takes in all the Jahjurm Sankos lands. The Eelkhanee has a body of about 1,000 horsemen of the same description as those of Kullat, Durraguz, and Koochan—not better and not worse. He showed me a party of about fifty, who were very fine men, dressed in a very pretty uniform of green frock-coats and brown lambswool busbies. I do not know which looks best in a body, this green uniform or the red I saw at Durraguz; or a light-blue coat with black busby, such as one frequently sees elsewhere in Persia.

The Eelkhanee seems to make a pretty good thing of it in raiding the Toorkmuns. When I was there, there was a party of about 100 prisoners bivouacking in the main street of the place. They were all chained, but the people seemed to take very little notice of them, and, contrary to what I should have expected, did not apparently regard them with very bitter feelings. I fancy the reason of this is that these Koords give quite as good as they get, and so have a certain fellow-feeling for their enemies. The prisoners did not look unhappy or frightened, but simply very much bored. They regarded me with much curiosity at first, thinking I was a Russian.

The Eelkhanee gave me the following list of the Ukhal Toorkmun forts, commencing from the east, viz.. Gawars. Anow 3 farsuks; Ashkabad 2 farsuks; Koorhee 1 farsuk; Googja 2 farsuks; Kipchak ¼ farsuk; Heerek ¼ farsuk; Salugle ¼ farsuk; Yasman ¼ farsuk; Akdashayak ½ farsuk; Karadashayak

½ farsuk; Izkund 2 farsuks; Baba Arab ½ farsuk: Koorjoo ½ farsuk; Kulhajar 1 farsuk; Beghar 1 farsuk; Yungee Kulla 1 farsuk; Yunshan 1 farsuk; Gunbadlee 1 farsuk; Kanjik 1 farsuk; Kakshal ½ farsuk; Ukhal ½ farsuk; Gooktuppah ½ farsuk; Yarajer 3 farsuks; Maheen 1 farsuk; Kulla Noor Vurdee 1 farsuk; Ak Tuppah 2 farskus; Karey 2 farsuks; Karakan 2 farsuks; Dooroon 1 farsuk; Gukcha ½ farsuk; Bahrzan 1 farsuk; Moorcha 1 farsuk; Soonchah 1 farsuk; Urcheeman 3 farsuks; Boormah 3 farsuks; Bamee 2 farsuks; Kizzil Chushma 1 farsuk; Yungee 1 farsuk; Zow 1 farsuk; Koch 1 farsuk; Kizzil Arwat 4 farsuks. The distances given being between each fort. From Kizzil Arwat to Kizzil Soo or Krasnovodsk is said to be 30 farsuks.

I stayed at Bujnurd four days, leaving on the 27th. Before starting, the Eelkhanee presented me with a carpet and a fine piece of chain mail, and I sent him the only things I had left, viz., a Snider breech-loading carbine with case, and one of my horses; but he was not satisfied with this exchange, and said he must present me with a Toorkmun horse, which I refused as delicately as I could, but he would take no refusal, and as I was setting off, sure enough up came a very decent looking animal. It was rather a difficult fix. Without the horse my presents were very fairly balanced with his, but with it the scales went entirely down in his favour. So, as the best way out of it, I said (Kabool) I accept, and then presented the horse to my Mehmindar. By the way I shall never forgive myself for forgetting this man's name, and unfortunately I made no note of it. However that may be, he was the dearest and best fellow I met in Persia, and never seemed to be able to do enough for me. On leaving, the Eelkhanee rode out three or four miles with me, and it was with the most

unfeigned regret that I shook his hand and said good-bye, and thanked him for his hospitality and kindness, which will always remain a green spot in my mind. My baggage was sent round by the regular road by the Duhna Ferozah, and I went by a worse road over the hill to Shanghan. I did not get away till 5.30 A.M., and the road led out in a direction 240° up a valley for the most part quite waste, for eight miles to the village of Urkan. The road then turned a few degrees more north, and ascended by a pretty easy gradient, but over a very stony path for another four miles to a halting-place where there was a fine spring, and plenty of fuel and some little forage. Here I halted to breakfast. The view from this place was very fine, and the whole of Bujnurd lay like a map at our feet. The hills were everywhere bare of trees, but covered with good pasturage.

From this the road goes in a direction 235°, and ascends for three miles, it then turns 312°, and descends for one mile and again ascends for one and a half miles over open hills. It then goes over and round undulating hills for some four and a half miles, when it begins to descend by an extremely narrow and dangerous path, the gradient of which, however, is not very steep for the first one and a half miles, after which it becomes simply the very worst bit of road I had yet seen in Persia. It seemed almost to go straight down, and in fact, did wind about the face of a nearly perpendicular precipice over the most utterly villanous pathway imaginable. Of course, we had to walk down, and it has ever since remained a matter of wonder to me how my wretched horse ever managed the descent. I know what with looking out to pick my own way, and being in terror lest the horse should slip on to the top of me, I had a

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very disagreeable time of it, and was glad when it was over. The distance I don't suppose is more than one and a half miles, but it beats the Sheeraz passes into fits. The whole road is completely commanded by extremely strong, utterly impracticable heights, and this pass is, I should say, quite beyond the power of any artillery to surmount, unless perhaps a Punjab mountain battery.

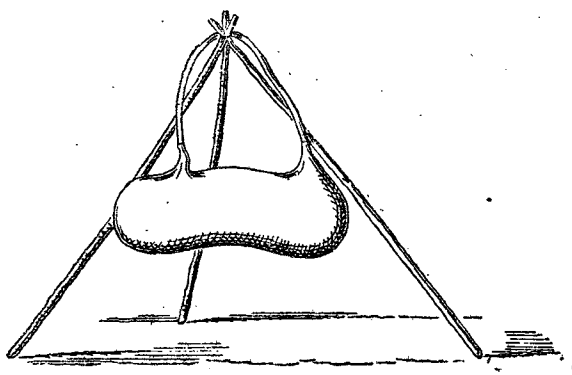
From the foot of the pass, we went in pretty level to Shanghan, which is only about half a mile distant. On the way we passed the head of the stream which supplies it with water; the source gushing out of the rock at once in a strong swift spring.

The valley of Shanghan is very like that of Attala which we passed on the way up to Magdala in 1868. It is about twenty miles long by five miles broad, and has an immense quantity of water, with some extremely large orchards and many little forts. The hills on either side are very rugged and difficult. From the east, the road from the Duhna Ferozah comes in, and on the west, the valley is closed apparently by a low watershed, called the Dusht-y-Armoobalee which divides the drainage of the Pool-y-Abresham* system from that of the Goorgan. The village of Shanghan is a large place of about 250 houses. It furnishes a guard of 100 horsemen for this exposed tract, which is completely open in the Goorgan direction, and is also much raided from the north. The drainage from the west runs south-east, hugging the foot of the south range called Koh-y-Buhar, and in the bed of the river are, it is said, favourite hiding-places of the Toorkmuns.

I was given excellent quarters in this place, and when I expressed my gratification to the Chief of my escort, he said, "Inshalla! as long as you remain in

* This river I have since learnt is rightly called the Kal Moora.

the Eelkhanee's land you shall have the best we can give you." We did not get in till nearly five, and by the time I had had my tub, the sun had moderated its fierce rays, and I was enabled to go up on to the roof. Here I was amused to see the Koord way of making butter. The churn was one which for simplicity of construction, durability, portability and facility in use leaves all one sees at an Agricultural Hall Show far behind. It simply consisted of a goat skin hung on a tripod and filled with milk. The Koordish

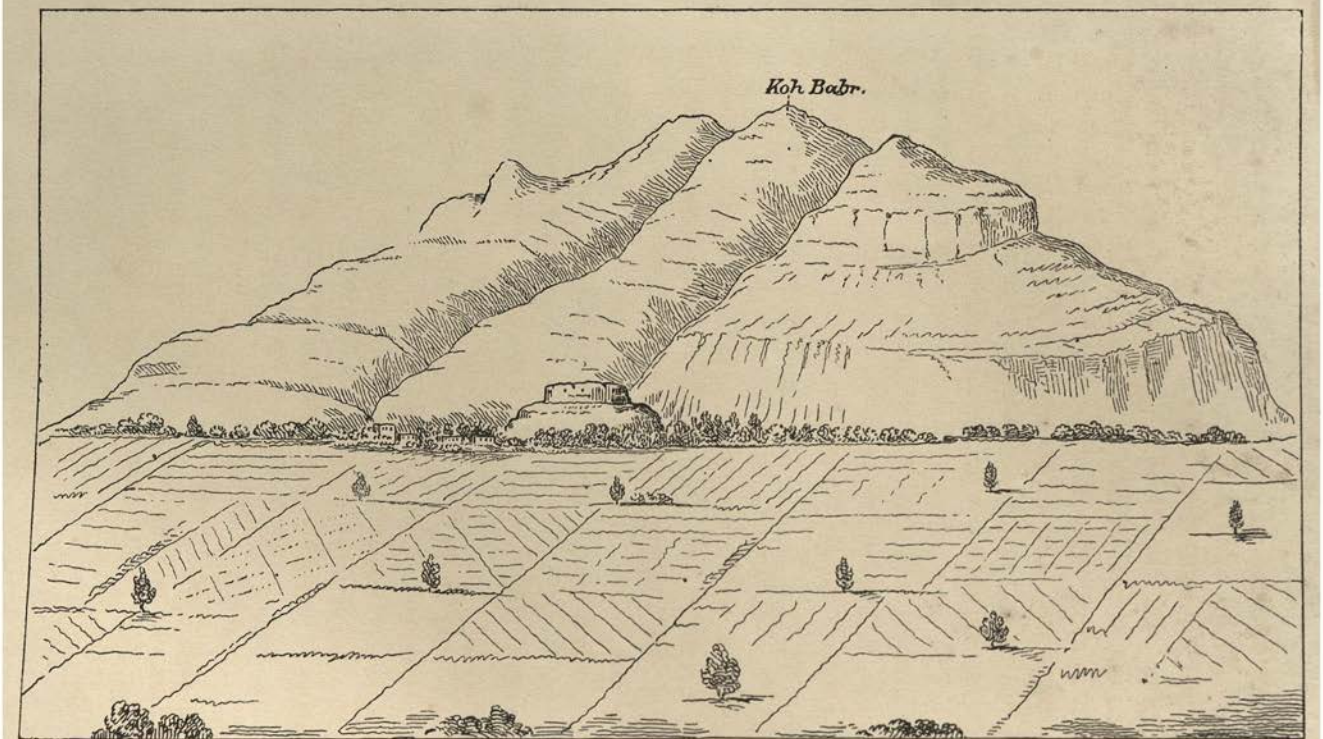


maiden sitting on one side caught the tail (as it were) of the skin, and gave it even forward and backward jerks as long as might be necessary. During the night it seemed as if a mania for butter making had seized every woman in the place, and I could not get to sleep for the regular sloshing sound the churning made, and the low monotonous drone with which they accompanied it.

On the 28th I made a short march to Sankhas: The road goes right across the valley in a direction 205° over an easy plain in four miles to the mouth of

the Duhna Shoughan. Here there is a tower and fort in order to command the defile and close it when necessary. Thence the road goes on in a direction south-east, passing the village of Durbund half a mile from the mouth, and at the seventh mile from Shoughan, that of Koorf half a mile on the right and Kali two miles on the left, both being situated at the foot of the hills bounding the defile called Koh Buhar on the right, and Koh Salukh on the left. From this point the road turns due south, and the defile, which has never been narrow except at the mouth, ceases. At the ninth mile the ruins of an old Caravanserai called Rabut-i-Shah is seen two miles off to the left; this is on the old caravan road from Astrabad by the Goorgan to Nishapoor, now completely abandoned on account of the Toorkmuns.

Thence the road goes for one mile over a stony plain draining to the south, and then for two miles through gardens, arriving at Sankhas at the twelfth mile. This village is a wretched place, situated in a most uninviting looking plain. It has 200 houses, and is the chief of four villages which are together, one called Chardeh, the others being, Khorasha with fifty houses, Safirabad, thirty houses, and Soorbat sixty. The village has evidently been a much larger place, as there are the remains of its old wall much beyond its present limit, and its gardens stretched for two miles round. The water here is decidedly brackish, a hint that we are getting back into desolate Persia proper again. Ever since leaving Herat I had found abundance of water everywhere; and I had begun to forget my experience of the waterless tracts. The whole country round this is very much exposed to Toorkmun raids, and consequently the whole plain is dotted with the towers of refuge, which are speaking monuments of the havoc committed



II. JAHJURM, FROM THE EAST. [*To face page* 105.

by these wretches. From this place I got the following bearings. The Koh Buhar stretched across the NW. horizon from 358° to 242°, the Koh Salukh across the NE. from 358° to 76°, and behind it from 100° to 76° was the Shahjuhan. Isfuraeen bore 86° twelve miles distant. Jahjurm 228°, Maiomai hill 190°, west end of the lower range which shut out all view to the south, 245°, the centre 170° (which was also said to be the direction of the village of this name), and the east end 140°; Muzeenan was said to bear 179°, Abbassabad 158°, and Subzwar 129°. On Friday, the 29th I marched to Jahjurm. At first the road took a direction 240° for about sixteen miles, and then turned a little more north to 258°, which direction it kept right in. The whole was over a level plain of hideous aspect, without a particle of vegetation to relieve the eye, and for two miles of the way we went over a regular bit of salt desert (Kuveer). The whole distance I make about thirty miles.

About halfway we came to a ruined howz, where I halted to have breakfast. The architecture of this place was rather peculiar, having evidently been meant to represent a lion couchant, and what with the accompaniment of the blazing sun, and the surroundings of a desolate waste, it was a fit emblem of Persia. A little way after this we met a caravan of about 100 souls on its way to Mushudd. It was composed of Azurbaijanees, and the men looked just the fellows to give a good account of the Toorkmuns. It was accompanied by an escort from Jahjurm, so I took their escort back with me and they went on with mine.

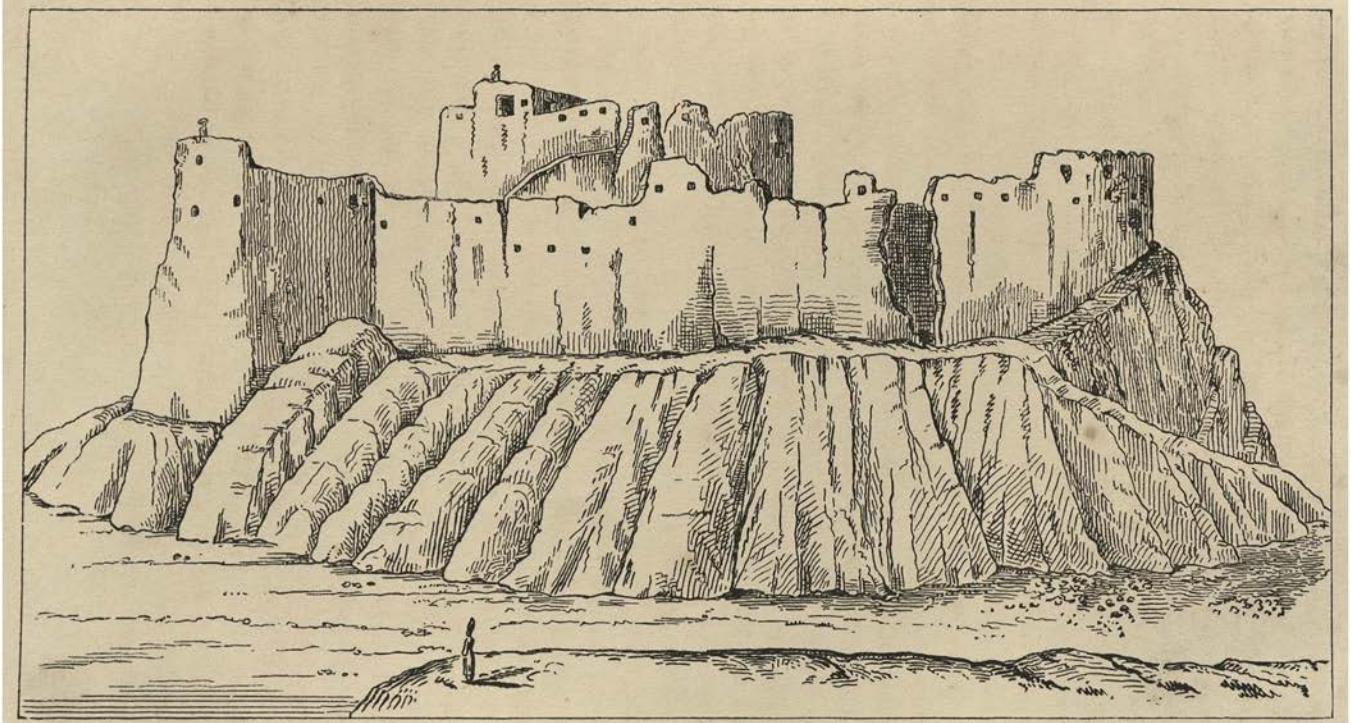
Jahjurm fort looks very imposing in the distance, but when we came up to it we found it quite in ruins. Round about it is the village of Jahjurm, which may

contain about 300 houses, though there seems to be more. All have domed roofs, owing to the impossibility of getting any wood for rafters, and the whole is surrounded by a dilapidated wall. It boasts a good deal of cultivation, some of which is dependent on rain and some on water brought by Karezes from the hills. Nearly the whole plain on which this cultivation is situated is covered by Toorkmun towers, showing what a dangerous spot this is. There do not seem to be many gardens.

The chief of my escort was a fine young man, who took the opportunity of showing me a watch which he had received from Captain Napier, evidently as a hint I should give him something also. But I simply could not, having been cleaned out completely before I reached this place. A private traveller stands in an invidious position in this respect, as, however much Persians may be assured that one is not in any official position, they do not believe it, so I suppose I shall get the reputation of being stingy here, and at other places after this.

I was shown into a very nice house, with a charming garden and a ruined fountain.

The old fort, now quite ruined, is situated in the centre of the village, on a mound about forty feet high. As far as I could make out from the debris, it has been a square, with walls about thirty feet high and an inner keep ten to fifteen feet higher. It has been unoccupied for more than twenty years, and were it not for the peculiar dryness of the climate, and the absence of rain, must have long ago dissolved. It is surrounded by a deep and broad ditch at the foot of the mound, and altogether it must have been a very strong work formerly.



II. OLD FORT OF JAHJURM. [*To face page* 106.

The chief of this place is one Mirza Naheem Khan, and he informed me that he had to keep up a force of about 100 horsemen. I saw about half of these, and they seemed to me to fall off a good deal from the standard of the Koordish cavalry. The men are Persians, and are not of such fine physique. The chief has also one light gun, which is kept on a bit of level below the fort, and was, I should think, a more honourable than useful appendage to his dignity.

I left this place early in the morning of the 30th. Baker's party had gone to Shahrood, by a road which led over the plain south-west, by Riabad; and Napier had gone by Nurdeen, direct to Astrabad; so there was nothing left for it but to follow a middle route, which went from Nurdeen to Shahrood.

The road for the first four miles goes over a plain, and then passes a stone fort called Kulla Jullaloodeen, situated on a hill, on the right of the road. Half a mile on we came to the village of Gurmah, said to contain 150 houses, and half a mile beyond again to that of Irad with seventy houses, and at seven and a half miles from Jahjurm to the village of Durra also with seventy houses.

The road now goes due west through a narrow barren valley draining from the north, with hills on both sides, and is very good. It keeps this direction to the twentieth mile, when it enters a valley running north-east to south-west, called Yazro, which has evidently been the bed of a dried-up lake. I crossed this in a direction 320°, for three miles, when it ascends a parallel ridge by a gentle gradient for one and a half miles, and then the road is level for half a mile to another lake basin called Girish or Givish, about three miles by two miles. From this the road descends for

one mile along the hillside to a spring and deserted hovel, whence it crosses the valley in a direction 260°, for three miles. Then it passes over a low ridge, and enters on the Nurdeen plain, and goes down it for three miles.

This valley is also an apparent lake bed, about three miles broad by six miles long, and is surrounded by hills, those on the left being called Kurrawal, and those on the right rejoicing in the name of Goorgoo. The village of Nurdeen is situated in the middle of the basin, and consists of a mud fort, with high walls, which is said to contain about 250 houses.

The chief is named Afrasiab Khan, and he seemed a very nice intelligent man; but as I here got an attack of fever, I was not able to see more of him than on the ride in. He was however very civil to me He has a body of about 300 horsemen, and those constituting my escort seemed a good serviceable lot, though I believe they are composed of all the scoundrels and refugees from the country round.

Nearly all night the fever stuck to me, but by dint of strong doses of quinine I got it under at last, and managed to drag my aching limbs outside and mount my horse: who was also, by the way, by this time in a very miserable state.

The road led along the valley for three miles and a half in a direction 252°, and then ascended by easy gradients for one and a half miles to the crest of the ridge dividing the drainage of the Nurdeen basin from that of a river draining to the Goorgan. From the top of this pass, the view is really beautiful. A pretty valley lies straight before me, bounded by the well-wooded hills of the Zeerkoh on the right, and the bare hills of Goorgan on the left: and on either side on terraces above the

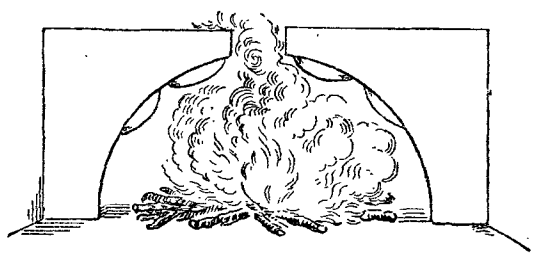
river is a large amount of cultivation, with many picturesque villages, embosomed in trees, dotted about; while in the background is a grand mountain called Khoosh Eylak.

The road after descending for three-quarters of a mile, turned more south, and at about six and a half miles passed the pretty village of Tolbeen, three-quarters of a mile to the right, under the red crags of the Zeerkoh. Descending by an easy path the right bank of this stream, the hamlet of Goolistan is reached at the ninth mile, after which the road descending, crosses the river and ascends pretty steeply to the village of Kasheedur, situated strongly and picturesquely on a high commanding spur, which runs between the river and a small tributary. The village has a hundred houses, a small amount of cultivation, and some vineyards. Here I halted to get some grapes, the only thing I fancied. Opposite is a village from which a road goes to Khousar over the hill.

From Kasheedur, after descending and crossing the tributary streams, the road above-mentioned ascends very steeply by a narrow path over a rugged spur, and then descends into a narrow glen, down which it goes to the village of Teelawa, which is situated on the bank of a fine stream. This place has some sixty houses, and a very fair expanse of cultivation and gardens. It forms the winter quarters of a tribe of Toorks, who were at this time mostly summering on the slopes of the Khoosh Eylak mountain, and belongs to one Alee Nuhee Khan Surhung, who is chief of Findurisk.

At first I bivouacked under a glorious tree overhanging the stream, as I learnt that the headman of the village was away at Findurisk, and I did not like

to trouble his wife who was said to be present. However, before long the old lady herself came up, and begged me to come to her house, which was ready for me. She added her husband would never forgive her if she had let me remain out in the open. So getting up, I walked up to her house where she received me herself very kindly, not even attempting to hide her face. Her manner was quite charming, so frank and lady-like. She asked me every minute what she could do for me, and after a most pleasant conversation, when my servant came to say my tub was ready, she jumped



up and said, "Yes, you go and bathe, and I'll go and get some bread ready for you."

Coming out afterwards, I saw her hard at work kneading the dough, and begged Kasim to go and tell her to let some one else do that, but one of her servants said it would be no use as she *would* do it herself. The oven consisted of a dome in section as above; the bread, which was of the usual blanket-like dimensions, being dabbed against the sides as shown in the accompanying section, the oven having first being heated red hot by a fire beneath.

I also saw the churn used by these people for making butter. It consisted of a trunk of a tree hollowed,

about three and a half feet high, and with a churning staff, just like our old-fashioned churns.

Part of the way in I was accompanied by such a charming youth, about the handsomest boy I ever saw, who rode like a centaur, and was only about thirteen, but used his gun with the greatest skill. He came to see me after I had settled down a bit, and said his father belonged to Khonsar, and had been kept in prison by the "Kujjur dog" at Astrabad. The manners of these Eastern youths have none of the awkwardness of our boys; he spoke quite with the air and manner of a man of the world, although living in such an out-of-the-way spot. It struck me, though of course I did not put such a delicate question, that if this youth had sisters, they must have been what I once heard a lady call another, "dangerously handsome."

On Monday the 1st September, I again started in a direction a little west of south, the road going up the valley—which ran on to join that of Nowdeh—for one mile, then commenced the stony, and at first a very steep, ascent of the Kotul Zurdawa. After a bit, however, it got easier, but continued indifferent for two miles. From the crest, Nurdeen bore about 35°, the Nowdeh valley 340°, and a road to Maiomai went off in a direction 190°, while my road bore 210°. The road descends immediately into the desolate basin of Zurdawa, which has also been a former lake bed, and is about five miles long by three miles across. Going down the whole length of this basin, the road then leaves it by an easy ascent over a low ridge for half a mile, whence it turns more north 220°, and descends by a very easy gradient over a stony hill slope for seven miles right into Kullat-y-Khech, a very miserable-look-

ing village surrounded by high walls and situated in a dreary waste.

The headman first took me inside the village, but as it looked very filthy I did not wish to put up there, so I asked him to get another place. He then went off and led me to a small garden in which there was what appeared like a shed, but on arriving at it I found it was a mosque with many of the faithful praying. There, he said, is your munzil. This was by no means the first time I had been offered a lodging in a mosque, but I always refused as, putting aside the danger of arousing the prejudices of some fanatic, it is not pleasant to have people coming in and out at all hours. So I told my friend I could not go into the mosque. He gave a grunt and said, "Not go into a mosque; then where do you want to go?" He evidently thought me most unreasonable.

On the 2nd I marched for Shahrood. The road went over a plain for twelve miles, whence it crossed a low ridge to Fewztuppah, when it entered another plain about twelve miles by six miles, bounded north by the main range, west by the Shahrood ridge, east by the above low ridge, and south by another low range which divided it from the plain north of Maiomai. This plain, or rather district, is called Poosht-y-Bostam, and contains thirty villages, the principal of which are Kurgan, Hoosenabad, Meyoon, Aleeabad, Taglooabad, Abasir, Dakhe, &c. Crossing this plain, at the twentieth mile we came to Bostam.

As I did not wish to stop here, though it is the seat of the governor of the province of Shahrood-Bostam, I pushed on, after a short halt, to Shahrood. During this I went inside one of the gates, and climbing on to the walls, got a good view of the place. It seemed

to cover a space of rather more than half a mile square, and has two walls, both of which are high and strong. Inside there are a number of gardens, and in the centre was the citadel, also with apparently strong walls.

From this to Shahrood is about four miles, the road going through a small defile by which the Bostam drainage runs to Shahrood. Here I got very good quarters, and remained a day, calling on the governor, who happened to be in the town at the time. He was a very weakly, dissipated-looking individual, named Kaiomorz* Mirza, and is an uncle of the Shah.

While I was calling on the Prince, a very shabby, dirty-looking individual, who told me in Persian that he was a Russian named Baumgarten, was announced. He seemed to take rather an impertinent interest in my proceedings.

Shahrood is a walled town of no particular shape, situated immediately under a low ridge, which is the end of a spur from the main range. It is surrounded by a wall, which is, however, of not more importance as a defence than a garden wall would be. Altogether it is a place of no strength whatever, as it is completely looked into by the hills which run along its north face. It has two large gates, one on the east and one on the west, and a small wicket on the north. The arg or citadel is situated on the north-east corner, and is an irregular octagonal structure, with walls 30 feet high, but no other pretence to strength. There are said to be over 1,000 houses; but it is difficult to form any idea of these, as, though from the hill above mentioned one can see all over the town, the houses are almost completely hidden by trees. Shahrood is situated on

* If one was inclined to pun on this name, I daresay Indian readers will see how appropriate it is to the sickly appearance of the owner.

a fine plain, in which the cultivation stretches for miles, and which would afford plentiful supplies.

Being placed at the junction of roads from Mushudd, Tehran, Yuzd, and Astrabad, it is the entrepôt of a considerable trade which goes on between these places; and for the same reason, and because supplies are here abundant, it also has very great strategical importance. The possession of this district of Shahrood-Bostam, would give the Russians based on the Caspian a most formidable influence in the affairs of either East or West Persia, and would be necessary to protect the communications of a force advancing by any of the routes south of the Attruk towards Mushudd and Herat. The only manufacture of any importance is that of boots and shoes, and whole streets are here devoted to the sale of these articles. Though the shapes do not suit European tastes, there is no doubt that the workmanship and material are really good.

The Rood-i-Shah which comes down from the main range above Tush, after watering Bostam, runs past the place, supplying the inhabitants of the surrounding district with a fair quantum of water, after which it goes on south, and is said to be lost eventually in a Kuveer.

There are some very good caravanserais here, in one of which the so-called Russian merchant Baumgarten lived. At his earnest solicitation I went to see him, but the den he inhabited was so filthy, that I was glad to get away soon. There are here also a few Armenians who trade in a small way.

There is a post-house (chuppur khana), and likewise a telegraph office, where I made the acquaintance of the very intelligent and agreeable signaller, when I went to send off some messages to Astrabad and Tehran.

From the hill above Shahrood, I took the following

bearings. Road to Deh Moolla 192°. A range lies south of Shahrood, running east and west, and is evidently continuous with the Maiomai range; beyond it is said to be Bearjoomund. There were a number of villages in the plain below, among which I noted Moghun 175° one mile, Kulla Nowroz Khan 168° one mile, Duzgud 160° three miles, Bedushk 307° three miles. The direction of Maiomai was said to be 95°, about forty miles distant, and Mugguz on the direct road from Jahjurm bore 57°.

By the time I reached this place, my only remaining horse had completely shut up. He seemed to be partially insensible and quite incapable of movement. His body was swollen all over, especially under the belly, and he altogether refused his food. I did not know what was the matter with him, but I imagine his state was owing more to hard work than anything. I was able to get a Persian to exchange him for a good little Galloway, which carried me the rest of the way to the Caspian, and which I eventually sold to a Russian at Guz.

I will now give my readers a short description of Khorassan, the province which gives its name to this work, and which after all the wanderings above described we have now left. Except, perhaps, Azurbaijan on the NW., Khorassan is the most important, as well as the largest province in Persia.

It stretches from Deh Moolla on the west to Surrukhs on the east, and from the Dusht-y-Toorkmun on the north, to what Khanikoff whimsically called the Desert of Lot on the south. It is about 500 miles in length, by 400 miles in breadth, having an area of about 200,000 square miles, considerably more than that of the British Isles, and nearly as much as that of France. The northern boundary, to give it in detail, commences to

the NW. of Shahrood from the Shahkoh peak, whence it follows the crest of the main ridge which separates the drainage of the Caspian from that which, running south, is lost in the tracts of Kuveer and desert land. From the Zerkoh above Nurdeen I should consider the water-parting in the Kalposh plain and the Dusht-y-Armoot Alee, between the Goorgan and the Kal Mura drainage will represent the line as near as possible.

Whence the boundary of the province is the same as the northern boundary of the petty states of Boojnoord, Koochoon, Durraguz and Kullat-y-Nadir respectively, which are described hereafter under those headings.

From the Attruk, the northern boundary of Persia is very doubtful, and depends a good deal on the relations of that Government with the Toorkmuns. There is no doubt that at one time or other, all the five Toorkmun tribes have acknowledged the Persian Government, and were the man to arise, it has quite sufficient power to make its authority respected. However this may be, it cannot be an advantage to any one to keep the Toorkmuns independent, and the political necessities of the Persians require that the states at least should be in subjection. Moreover, the geographical boundary of Persia to the north is clearly the south edge of the Kara Kum desert. It seems clear, therefore, that the Caspian should form the boundary on the Adji Bajour bay, and that thence it should run along the north skirt of the Toorkmun cultivation on the Attruk to Surrukhs. In the same way, Merv clearly belonged to Persia, but as it is not politically necessary, nor geographically part of that country, it should belong rather to Afghanistan. From Surrukhs, the frontier runs down the back to the Hurree Rood to Shaharh, whence it is correctly shown in the map.

From the north-easternmost corner of the frontier of Kullat-y-Nadir the limit of Khorassan takes in all the country to the left bank of the Tejund river, up to Surrukhs, whence the east line runs south along this river, which above the Pool-y-Khatoon is called the Hurree Rood, the left bank being Persian, the right Afghan, though from Surrukhs to Kareez, neither one nor the other ever dare to intrude on this favourite haunt of the Toorkmun.

From the point where the Hurree Rood first turns decidedly to the north, the frontier line leaves that river, and is henceforth, as far as Seestan, not defined with any exactness, though that given in Colonel Walker's map of 1875 is not far out; that is, it goes between the Koh Sung-y-Dookhtur and Doshakh, so that Kafir Kullu is on the Afghan side; as, likewise, is Kullund on the south of the ridge, Yezdoon being within the frontier of the Amir of Ghaeen. There is then a howling wilderness, graphically called the "Plain of Despair" (Dusht-y-Na-oomed), in which there are no points to catch hold of. Clearing this delectable tract, we have Bellew's authority for regarding the Hurree Rood as the limit of the Afghan possessions.

Thence we may take up the boundary as defined by the Seestan arbitrator, Sir Frederick Goldsmid, viz. the west and south limit of the Naizar to the left bank of the Helmund, whence that bank of the river forms the boundary as far as Kohuk, after which it consists of a line drawn from Kohuk to the hill known as Koh Mullik Seeah, on the range dividing Seestan from the desert of Kirman.

From the Mullik Seeah Koh, the line may be said to go to the fort of Nusratabad; beyond which the Khorassan territory is divided from the rest of Persia by a

howling desert. That is from Kirman by the Dusht-y-Loot, and according to Khanikoff, the boundary goes from Nusratabad to within a few miles of Deh-y-Saif, on Khanikoff's route from Nehbundan to Kirman, thence to the hill Nekhee Vund, and thence to west of Poosht-y-Buddan which belongs to Tubbus. From this a line drawn through the Dusht-y-Kuveer to about Deh Moolla the NW. limit of Shahrood, will give the boundary in this direction.

It is thus a fact that Khorassan is surrounded in every single direction, except a portion on its NW., by deserts. On the north is the desert of the Toorkmuns; on the east is the perfectly uninhabited, though not quite uninhabitable, tract from Surrukhs to Kareez; and then the "Plain of Despair;" the line being thence taken up by the desert of Balochistan. On the south there is the waste Seestan and Nurmasheer, and this is continuous with the waterless tract called Loot, which again runs into the equally uninviting desolate region of the Kuveer. The political divisions of Khorassan are as follows:—1. Shahrood-Bostam, 2. Boojnoord, 3. Koochoon, 4. Durraguz, 5. Kullat-y-Nadir, 6. Mushudd, 7. Nishapoor, 8. Subzwar, 9. Toorshez, 10. Toorbut, 11. Jam, 12. Khaf, 13. Tubuss-wa-Toon, 14. Ghaeen and Seestan. Further on I give a slight sketch of the resources and topography of each of these.

The whole of Khorassan, if the tracts immediately bordering on the desert are excepted, is essentially mountainous, and after marching through it from south to north and from east and west, there were very few of my marches in which I had not to cross some hill or other, and then it was only because I was going down or up a valley between hills.

Leaving out in this place the question as to whether

the ranges of Persia are connected, through those of Khorassan, with the mountain system of Afghanistan, and consequently also with that of the Himalayas, there is no doubt that all the ranges of this province can be traced to belong to one system, which is connected with, and commences from, the continuation of the Elboorz range north of Shahrood.

Starting from the mountain known as the Shah Koh, the ridge runs past the Chehl Chaleean and Wajmenoo, passes the Shahwur Koh, and thence by the Ubbur Koh to the Khoosh Eylak. From this the range turns NE., draining north into the Nowdeh valley, is again crossed on the road from Nurdeen to Nowdeh by the Kotul Zurdawa.

Thence to the Khorkhood there is a tract of country which has not been traversed by any European, unless, indeed Captain Napier has been there lately. The range seems here to open out into the broad undulating slopes of the Kulposh plain and the Dusht-y-Armoot Alee, but still it preserves a perfectly distinct watershed between the drainage of the Goorgan and that of the Kal-Mura system.

So far the range throws out no great spurs, except that of the Koh Juhan Noomah, which leaves it above Shahkoh and runs towards the Caspian, and which is not, therefore, in Khorassan. On the north it descends steeply to the basin of the Goorgan, and on the south the spurs—viz., those of the Koh Baba and Koh Buhar —are short and unimportant. There is, however, a ridge, which may be called the Maiomai ridge, which would seem to have its origin in a spur which, starting from Khoosh Eylak, bounds the valley called Posht-y-Bostam on the south, and runs east of Bostam, and then turning west is broken up into more or less disconnected

ridges round Mai-o-mai; where, however, there is an apparently isolated peak, which rises to a height of 6,000 feet above the sea level.

From Koh Khorkhood the main range runs on (it is now called Aladagh, from a fine peach of that name) south-west of Boojnoord, past the Durbund Feroza to the Koh Tukht-y-Mirza, whence a spur, called the Koh Salig, which encloses the Showghan valley on the south, is thrown out to the south-west. From the Aladagh other spurs run down towards the Attruk, one of which encircles the Boojnoord basin on the north, while from the Tukht-y-Mirza—the Prince's seat—rises the ridge crossed by me at the Kaboot Kummai, which encloses it on the south.

From the "Prince's Seat" the main range runs east by south, and then south-east; and, under the name of the Koh Shahjuhan, bounds the Koochoon valley on the south; and under that of Koh Mehrabad (or, according to Napier, Beenabood Koh), it lies to the south of the Mushudd valley.

At this point I must stop to consider the range which runs along the whole northern frontier of Khorassan. It may be a question whether this northern range can be considered an offshoot from that I have just been describing, or whether it must be deemed quite distinct; and this, I take it, depends entirely on how the reader regards the question as to the proper description of mountain ranges. I do not wish to attempt to confute the phenomena on which geologists found rules for tracing the course of mountains, but I think it is often difficult for persons knowing nothing of that science to understand these rules, and they consequently frequently have seemed to me arbitrary. The rule which I have always followed in describing mountain ranges

may be very incorrect from a scientific point of view, but I think it is an easily intelligible one, and it is moreover invariable. I hold that two or more apparently distinct ranges must be considered as part and parcel of the same system, if they are connected by any distinct watershed: that is, if standing on the crest of one, you can go to the crest of the other by keeping along the crest of the water-parting without *crossing* any drainage line whatever.

On this theory I hold that the northern range of the Attruk and Mushudd valleys is not a distinct range, but only an offshoot of the southern range; for though I have not crossed from Mushudd to Koochoon, I understand there is a distinct rise in going from Ratkan, and a distinct descent towards Jafirabad; and, therefore, I am of opinion there is a point on the southern range from which one might descend, and, keeping the crest of a distinct watershed the whole way, again ascend to the crest of the northern ridge at Koh Huzar Musjid, or thereabouts.

However this may be, I will commence my description of the northern range by suggesting that as it has no name applicable to its whole length, it might well be called the Koh-y-Damun, or Mountains of the Border. From the Koh Tuhmusp the range runs ESE. and WNW. In the latter direction it opens out into a high undulating plateau, called Maidankhooree, and then runs past Koh Duz round the head of the Durringa drainage to a point above Ashkabad; thence it continues in one unbroken line to close on to the Caspian, where the old bed of the Oxus is supposed to have entered that sea. The east part is called the Kuren Dagh, the western the Kopit Dagh. On the north this range, as far as is known, throws out no large spur;

but on the south, as well as we can judge from the supposed lie of the main feeders of the Attruk, there are probably some considerable offshoots between the Soont and the Chandeer, and between the latter and the Attruk, and one which divides the Zeristan valley from that of Kooshkhana I saw from Shirwan.

From the point above Ashkabad above noted, the ridge changes its character to the extent that whereas west of that point the main spurs are thrown out to the south, east of it they are thrown out to the north. The first of these is a ridge which runs parallel with the main range, and, bounding the Durringa valley on the north, is known at its end, if not throughout its whole length, as the Zurreen Koh.

Passing by a minor spur which goes from the Koh Duz, between the drainage of Durringa and Mahamadabad, we come to a spur which, starting from the head of the Zungalanee river, runs east, parallel with the main range, and then turns sharp to the north-west, enclosing the Durraguz basin. Over this range lies the Allaho Akbur pass, and I crossed it again at a low dip between Zungalanee and Durraguz, where it was called Karajukhar.

I may now take up the main range again from the Koh Tuhmusp, whence its course is ESE. On the north it throws out steep spurs between the various rivers, as between Zungalanee and Tirgaun, the latter and Laeen, and again between Laeen and Igdaleek. The next spur is one which I crossed at the Goyik Kotul, and it runs to the north and then east round the west and north sides of the Kullat; while another comes from the main range west of Vardeh, encloses that valley on the north, is crossed by the Mirza Gooshtee Pass on the road to Kullat, and then twists

round to the north, throwing out ramifications which form the south and east sides of the Kullat.

From the Kotul Dewa Boyjun, where the range is called Aladagh, the spurs on both sides become more and more insignificant, till at Moozduran the range forms a knife-like crest with no offshoots at all, and above Shorjah it dies away in undulations terminated by the Tejund.

Turning now to the main range at the point west of Mushudd, where it is called Koh Mehrabad, there is only one spur calling for notice. That is one which runs out from about Sooltan Maidan to the south, and dividing the drainage of the Kal Murra system from that of Nishapoor, and then turns west and forms the ridge known as the Jouven or Jugatai ridge. This bounds Subzwar on the north, and is connected by a ridge (the crest of which, according to Bellew, is 4,290 ft. above the sea) which divides Nishapoor from Subzwar with another ridge called Koh-y-Meesh, which cuts off the Subzwar plain from the great desert.

We now again come to a point in the main range where to the south of Mushudd it gives a very decided dip—so much so that, except on the theory which I hold to be the correct one, it may be said that a new range would commence south of Shureefabad. Still, as in going from Nishapoor to, say, Furreemoon, there is a distinct ascent over a ridge which I saw to the left in going between the latter and Sungbust, I hold that here we have the link which connects the mountains of Northern Khorassan with those on the east. Unfortunately, as travellers in these parts always go to Mushudd from Nishapoor, they choose the shorter road over the Koh Mehrabad by Jagurk, and therefore we have not much information to go upon.

The Seestan mission came up from Toorbut to Mushudd, and consequently did not cross this ridge, but kept to the east of it. But from the context I gather that the link was in the plateau of Bewajan. Major Smith does not say much about it, but observes, "to the south-east a splendid view of the snowy mountains behind Herat burst upon our view." Thus I argue, that they must have been on high ground, because if they had been in a hollow no such view would have been visible. Again, Bellew says the Bewajan plateau forms a long narrow strip of table-land sloping east and west, in which latter direction it drops to the plain of Nishapoor. It is thus evident to me that there must be a distinct watershed, as I have said, between the drainage of the Sur-y-Jam district and that of Nishapoor, which watershed is the link I am seeking.

From this watershed the Koh Soorkh ridge runs off to the west, bounding Nishapoor on the south, and further south, either from the ridge crossed north of Rubat-y-Soofeed, or from the Godur-y-Rukh, or Mahamad Mirza, a ridge runs out to the east, dividing the drainage of Sir-y-Jam from that of Jam. This ridge I crossed between Furreemoon and Sungbust, and it is quite clearly marked. I notice it because from it is the origin of the ridge which Napier calls the Koh Kat-y-Shumsheer, but which I was told was named Koh Yoghur and Koh Chehl Sung, and which drains on the one side to the Ab-y-Mushudd, on the other to the Jam river. This ridge was on my right the whole way to Ak Durbund. There may be a plateau on it, as Napier states in his map, but I heard of none, and from the view I got of the range to the east from Furreemoon, and to the south from the valley of the Mushudd river, I should doubt it. I am inclined to think that

there are probably more torrents draining east into the Hurree Rood than we yet know of.

From the Godur-y-Rokh the range turns west round the head of the Kullendurabad drainage to the Godur-y-Bedar, where Smith says "the ranges of Koh-y-Nasar to the west and Koh-y-Bors to the east join," and this agrees with my own observations. I came up a parallel route to the Toorbut one, through Bakhurz, and at very nearly the same latitude as this Godur-y-Bedar crossed a pass called the Godur-y-Kulla Minar, over a range which divides the drainage of the Bakhurz district from that of Jam. My note-book says:—"It is connected to the west with the Bakhurz ridge, and first runs east and west, but to the east of the Kulla Minar pass it turns more south, and has a general direction north-west to south-east, and ends in a low ridge which Clerk describes between Mohsinabad and Kareez. This range would be aptly called the Jam range.

From the Godur-y-Bedar the range runs south-east, separating Bakhurz from Toorbut; on the east it throws out no important spurs, the hills sloping easily towards Himutabad and Shahr-y-Now, though there is a low ridge intervening between the latter and Mushudd-y-Reza; and Bellew says, that from the above point a ridge runs round the head of Toorbut, and is continuous with the Koh Azkund which bounds the Toorsheez plain on the north.

From the west of Shahr-y-Now the range runs on south-east, dividing Khaf from Mushudd-y-Reza. There is no doubt that it goes on south of Kareez, and is the same range crossed between Ghoreean and Khaf of which the Koh Sung-y-Dokhtar is a spur, and on which is the Koh Do Shakh. This range runs parallel with the Hurree Rood, and ends in the Herat valley. The

low pass which I crossed between Zundehjan and Deh Minar was over its dying end.

So far regarding its course as seen from the east I am pretty certain, but of its west ramifications I am not so sure. We have two routes which may help us, however—the first that of Captain Clerk, from Khaf to Toorsheez, and the second that of Khanikoff, from Goonabad to the former.

The place which Clerk calls Khaf is properly called Rooee, or Khaf Paeen, while Nusseerabad is Khaf Bala. Apparently there is no range of hills crossed between Khaf Paeen and Toorsheez. The only mention of any ascent is at the nineteenth mile between Nusseerabad and Sungoon, and a gradual descent from the twenty-third to the twenty-sixth mile; at the eighth mile, next stage, is an "undulating ascent" to the twelfth mile, and a "gradual descent" to the thirteenth mile. At the twenty-first mile the Toorbut river is crossed.

Von Bünge, one of Khanikoff's officers, went from Khaf to Goonabad. In the first march to Asudabad he crosses the Koh-y-Sinau "at no very great height." In the second, to Nowdeh Pishung, he crosses the north end of the Koh Khaibur by "a not very high pass." I take it the Koh Khaibur is part of a range to the south, as he mentions having crossed the north end of it. The Koh Sinau is probably a spur from the Kurrat Koh, though it is strange that Clerk makes no mention of any ascent whatever between Khaf and Nusseerabad. From the above it would seem that there is no spur of the Kurrat range which is connected with the Ghaeen hills, but I am inclined to think the Koh Sinau ridge is continuous with that of the Koh Khaibur, and I am pretty sure that the Koh Khaibur is joined to the range which bounds the sub-district of Neembolook on

the north. The latter range is certainly one with the range between Ghaeen and Toon, being joined to it by the spur over which I crossed between Kakh and Neembolook. At all events, whether it is right or wrong, this is the theory I hold by.

Therefore, from the point whence this spur is connected with the Toon range I will now continue the description. The range runs south-east, and before reaching the latitude of Ghaeen it throws out a spur over which is the Godur-y-God pass, as well as that by which I reached Ghaeen, and which is ended by the junction of the Ghaeen and Neembolook drainage.

Thence it turns more east round the head of the south drainage of Ghaeen, and is crossed by the Godur-y-Khooneek, shortly after which it throws out to the south-east a spur called the Koh Guzeek, the end of which I crossed between Guzeek and Goolwurda, but the main range now turns south and a little west to the Samun Shahee Pass, from which a spur goes south-west to the north of Birjund, and eventually dies away in the desert.

The main range is continued in the Koh Mohmeenabad, which bounds the Birjund drainage basin on the north-east, and I crossed it again between Isfizar and Durmeean. Running south-east from the Samun Shahee Pass to the south of the above pass, the range then turns south, and is crossed by the Godur-y-Guadakoh between Seestan and Birjund. After this, it throws out a spur called the Koh Bageeran, which bounds the Birjund valley on the south, and probably dies in the desert near Khoosf.

From the same point, the Gundakoh, other spurs, which form the hills of the Neh sub-district, branch out to the south. Most of these probably die away in the

desert; but I think it will be found that they are continuous with the range crossed by the Seestan Mission between Narmasheer and Seestan, and that they cut off all connection between the Dusht-y-Loot, and that of Baloochistan. However this may be, I will now turn back to the point below the Godur Durmeean noted above. I notice that St. John in his map, I suppose on the information of Lovett, makes the drainage of Foorg Durmeean eventually reach the Haroot Rood. This may be the case, but I do not think it is; 1st, because from my own careful inquiries on the spot, I ascertained that the drainage of this tract runs into one of the peculiar depressions with which this tract abounds. This is called the Duk-y-Toondee, and is said to be about fifty miles ESE. of Ahwaz; 2nd, from Foorg, from a hill near Guzeek, and from Goolwarda, I traced with my own eye a range which cuts right across the supposed line of this drainage.

I believe that this range is connected with the hills of Doroh and Lanoo: and though I daresay there are easy passes over it, which may look like gaps, I think that the drainage of the Haroot Rood is quite separate from that of the Sooneekhana sub-division. And I have said in a former chapter, that if there is any connection between the Afghan hills and these, I think it must be through this ridge.

Now, I must turn back to the point where the Toon range is connected, as I suppose, with that of Khaf, and trace the west and north ramifications of this range. In the first place, the range runs north in the direction of Bejistoon, near which it probably ends in the desert. To the west, it throws out spurs as far as Toon, all of which also end in the desert.

This leaves the mountains about Tubbus uncon-

nected with the Khorassan system, and such, I believe, is the case. They certainly are not connected through the Toon spurs, nor do I think that they are further to the south, as from Bushrooya I could not only not see any signs of hills in the direction of Birjund, but I was told there was none on the road, those seen being on the left.

I am not prepared to say to what system these mountains of Tubbus belong, but on the whole I am of opinion that after exploration may perhaps show they are continuous with the range to the north of Yuzd. I must admit, however, that such an exploration would be very difficult, as I am not aware of *any* road leading from Yuzd in a direction (as to Toon or Ghaeen direct) which would afford the necessary information.

To turn now to the Hydrography of this tract. If my readers have followed my attempt to trace out the ramifications of the mountain system of Khorassan, they will be in a position to form some general idea of the probable direction of its drainage.

Except the Attruk, which reaches the Caspian, every river in Khorassan, is sooner or later absorbed in sandy deserts or salt wastes.

On the north of the range which I have ventured to nome the Koh-y-Damun, all the rivers are short lived; and with three exceptions are little more than torrents; these are the Durrunga, the Zungalanee, and the Kullat streams; and I could not learn that any of these reach the Tejund, though it seems pretty certain that they must do so in flood.

The Durrunga rises to the west of the Koh Duz, and the Zungalanee to the west, and both flow in opposite directions, probably again approaching each

other as they make their exit from the hills. In the Zungalanee, and I believe in the Durrunga, there is always abundance of water; but that in the last is more used for cultivation, while all the beautiful tracts on the banks of the former are allowed to lie waste, a monument of Toorkmun oppression and Persian imbecility.

The principal river in Khorassan is the Attruk, but as I have only visited a part of it, and I have since heard that Captain Napier has seen more of it than any other European, I will leave it to him to describe. Baker places the true source at the spring of Kara Kazan, to the south of Shirwan; though I myself should be inclined to place it above the village of Tawareekh, fully sixty miles further off. However this may be, there is no doubt its source is in Koochoon territory, and it cannot have a length of less than 350 miles.

After leaving the Koochoon boundary, it becomes, I believe, enclosed between rugged precipitous hills, and its current is probably very swift; thus precluding any possibility of its bed being adopted as a roadway, or of being utilized for irrigational purposes. It is joined by only one feeder, the Chandyr, which enters it at a spur called Chat-y-Attruk. In the lower part of its course after it has emerged from the hills, its current becomes sluggish, and being a deep stream, it is possibly suitable for navigation by light boats during this part of its course to the Caspian, which it joins at the Hussum Koolee Bay.

The next principal river is the Kushuff Rood or Ab-y-Mushudd. This, according to Napier rises in the mountains of Hazra Musjeed to the north of Chinaran, though the natives consider its source very much as they do in the case of the Attruk to be at the spring of

Chasma Gilass; both streams joining a mile below the village of Mehrabad.

The spring is a magnificent one, pouring forth at once from a limestone hill side, into a basin, which has a depth of twelve to fourteen feet. The whole of this water, however, is drawn off into a canal which has been excavated, and provides the holy city of Mushudd-ul-Mukuddus with its water supply; consequently, the stream which I crossed by the Pool-y-Shah below the Khajeh Rubbee shrine, must have been collected from other streamlets draining from the mountains north and south. At this point there was a considerable supply of water, the stream being thirty feet wide by about three feet deep. The next point at which I crossed it was south of Kenigosha, where it had become wider but shallower, having been drawn off for irrigational purposes by the villages above. From this I followed it down to its near confluence with the Hurree Rood at Pool-y-Khatoon, and it everywhere had in its bed a good supply of water. Below Kozgoon it is scarcely drawn on at all, though it has on both banks a fine tract capable of cultivation. Its length is probably about 250 miles, and it drains an area of some 9,000 square miles.

The Hurree Rood, although it bounds the province on the east, can hardly be said to belong to it, as I should doubt there being a single acre of land irrigated from this river, and there are no Persian villages on it at all. Below Pool-y-Khatoon, where by the affluence of the Ab-y-Mushudd, it becomes the Tejund, there was when I was there, a scanty stream scarcely running; but it is evident from the scour of the high banks, no less than from the large area drained by these united streams, that after flood there must be a fine body of water in

it. Beyond Surrukhs, it turns to the west and is eventually lost in the desert, though at what exact spot it terminates is not known, as no European traveller has traversed any of the routes leading north from the Attruk, the following of which might have settled this point.

All the other rivers of Khorassan are mere torrents, which though they have often a perennial supply near their source, are so much drawn on by irrigation that it is only in flood they have sufficient in them to reach their last resting-place in the thirsty desert.

The first of these, which I need notice, is the Shahrood. This river rises in two branches, one of which runs down from between the Shah Koh and the Shahwar Koh, and is formed of two streamlets, one coming from the Chehl Chaleean pass, the other from that of Wajimenoo. The other branch of the Shahrood drains the district of Poosht-y-Bostam and has its rise from the south slopes of the Abbur Koh, and flowing past Bostam joins with the Tush branch, north of the low ridge which bounds the Shahrood plain on the north. What little water it has left on passing Shahrood is quickly used up for irrigation, and a short way to the south, it is sucked up into the desert, which also appears to absorb the drainage of Damghan.

The next river is the Kal Murra, which though it drains an immense extent of country seems to have very little water in any of its numerous branches, and then only near the hills. The eastern branch, which may be called that of Jahjurm, comes from a ridge dividing the drainage of Jahjurm from that of Nurdeen. I went up this valley, but found no water in it, though there are "Kunats" led off from parts of its course to the Jahjurm villages. The centre branch, which St. John calls the Karasoo, comes from the Showghan valley, in

which there are several streams, one from the direction of the Duhna Firoza; another fine spring starts out from the hill just above Showghan; and a third comes from the direction of Rabat-y-Ishk. These all join north of the defile formed by the closing heights of the Koh Buhar and the Koh Saliz, to provide water for the four villages of Sunkhas or Chardeh, beyond which I think no water goes. Of the Isfuraeen branch, I know nothing, save that it provides irrigation for a large village called Meeanabad. Finally, the Jouven branch drains a tract of hills extending from the Koh Shahjuhan to Sooltan Mardan. From Captain Napier's account, there would seem ordinarily to be but little if any water in its bed, except above the village of Kamaistan, where there are several streamlets which join it, with "a good head of water." All these torrent beds run into one north of the Jouven ridge, and then going through a defile emerge at a place called the Pool-y-Abresham. Captain Clerk mentions that at this point there is nothing but the "dry deep bed of the river," and Napier says there is a small stream, "brackish and bitter," with no indication of "ever carrying a large body of water;" just below this, there is "a depression in the surface of the desert covered with a white saline efflorescence;" but it is "at times evidently a wide marsh." Still the stream seems to struggle on, for Captain Clerk, who crossed on the return journey from Herat, forty miles below this, says there was still a stream of "two feet of water, very salt," the banks beings "steep and high." The length of the longest branch of this stream would be only about 160 miles, but the tract drained by its tributaries is very extensive, not less than 10,000 square miles, and if the Subzwar plain drains to it, about which, however, I am doubtful, very much more.

The river of Nishapoor, which is called by Clerk the Shisteray from the name it bore on the south road, also seems to drain a large area. Captain Napier in going from Jouven to Nishapoor by the turquoise mines at Madan crossed it not far from its source, where it is called the Ab-y-Maroosk from a Koordish district of this name in the mountains above, but he gives no information regarding its size, and in the accounts of other travellers who crossed it lower down, I have not been more fortunate. However, from the former reputed fertility of the plain of Nishapoor, which is said to have been irrigated by twelve perennial streams, affording 12,000 "Karez," and the fact that Clerk in his route from Nishapoor to Shorab mentions crossing no less than eleven drainage beds, it may be surmised that a considerable body of water flows from the south slopes of the Beenaloh or Mehrabad range. Clerk, who crossed it over seventy miles lower down, mentions that even so far on its course, it was still "deep and rapid." Of its course beyond this nothing is known, but, unless it is suddenly arrested, as is shown in St. John's map, in a swamp, or Kuveer, it may be surmised that in flood it would have a considerably longer course. It is therefore, I think, to be regretted that some of the members of the Seestan mission, who at Bejistoon and Yoonasie could not have been very far off its course, did not take the opportunity to clear this point up. Bellew indeed, mentions seeing the "Kuveer" to the west of the first place. I think it is more than probable that the drainage of Bushrooya, falls into the same "Kuveer" as that of Nishapoor, Toorsheez, and Goonabur, and that this basin is quite distinct from any "Kuveer" to the west.

There are no other rivers of any importance in Kho-

rassan, those that there are only having water in them in flood. But it will not be out of place if I make a few remarks regarding their drainage beds and the course taken by them. On the west of the Toon range the largest drainage bed is that of Khoosf, which collects its water from the Mohweenabad and Bajeeran ranges and turns south towards Kirman. How far it proceeds into the "Loot" desert, I do not know.

On the east, all the drainage of the tract called Suy-Jam, and the east drainage of Bewajan, goes in the Kushuff Rood. Of the Bakhurz range there is only one point I wish to notice. That is, all the drainage south of the Godur Kulla Minar from Himutabad, Shuhr-y-Now, drains south-east, and collects in the ravine bed which, passing Mohseenabad, falls direct into the Hurree Rood. There is no connection between the drainage of Bakhurz and Jam.

In Walker's map of 1875, the drainage of an immense tract, *i.e.*, from Yezdoon, Ahwaz, Ghaeen, Neembolook, and a large portion of Khaf, is made to collect in a bed, the Kurrat Rood, which goes through the Khaf range between Sung-y-Doochtur and Doshakh and falls into the Hurree Rood by Tehbad. This is, I believe, quite wrong, for as I have said before, the drainage of this tract, which is called Zeerkoh, has no connection with the Hurree Rood at all. All the drainage of this space is absorbed into three of the great depressions, peculiar, as far as I know, to Central Asia. These are called Hamoon in the country all about Seestan, and also God, but here they are called "Daks."

The drainage of Neembolook, Ghaeen, and of Khaf Paeen goes to the Dak-y-Dewalan; that of the Zeerkoh tract, which includes all to the east of the Koh

Angooran range, comprising Goolwarda, Shorab, Yezdoon, and Kullund, drains to the Dak-y-Khooshab close to the Koo Kaboorla; that of Foorg, Durmeean, Ahwaz, Tubbus, drains to the Dak-y-Toondee in the Dusht-y-Naoomed.

There is one other point which has yet to be cleared up. If, as I suppose, the hills of Nehbundan are continuous with those passed by Goldsmid between Nurmasheer and Seestan, I conclude that the drainage of the east portion falls into the Hamoon of the Helmund. The Khoosh river seems to drain a considerable tract of country, and is eventually lost in the Loot desert; where Khanikoff crossed, it was in April completely dry.

All over Khorassan, indeed all over Persia, wherever there is a possibility of their construction, Kunats or Karezes, that is underground canals, have been dug; so that though the rivers of Persia are generally waterless, whatever water can be got out of the hill sides is utilised. Karezes are thus constructed:—The spot having been ascertained where a spring of water issues, a series of shafts are then dug at regular intervals in the direction of the tract which it is wished to irrigate, and these are afterwards connected by tunnels slightly sloping downwards. It follows, therefore, that the shafts get deeper and deeper according to the distance and the slope of the ground. The length of the Karez of course depends on the supply of water, and the distance it has to be brought. They are found all over Persia, and their course can be traced for miles across perfectly waterless plains by the circular heaps of earth thrown up at intervals around the shafts.

As far as I know there are no lakes in Khorassan. The Chasma Gilass has been said to be a lake, but

Napier found it was only a spring. The rivers certainly nearly all empty themselves into swamps, which perhaps become almost lakes after heavy floods, but there are no permanent collections of water deserving this name. The lake or Hamoon of Seestan I consider beyond the limits of this province, but even this is said to be fast drying up.

I think the climate of Khorassan is very fine, and travelling in spring or autumn is pleasant enough. In summer the sun's rays descend too fiercely to make marching in the daytime an exhilarating amusement, but I scarcely remember anything approaching to a hot night. In winter, too, I can imagine that the wind sweeping over the bare open and snow-covered plains would be very trying. There is one point which should not be passed over here; the fierce wind which blows in some parts of south-east Khorassan. I take it to be the same as is called in Seestan the "bad-y-sud-o-beest roz." It blows from the north to the south, and I found it most disagreeable during my journey from Birjund to Pahre, especially between Boojd and Ifuzar.

The mineral productions of Khorassan have not received sufficient attention to enable me to form any idea as to their value or extent. The turquoise procured from mines at Madan, near Nishapoor, is the most celebrated of its mineral productions. Bellew says there are other mines in Toorshez, and the Chief of Tubbus informed me he had found them in the Koh Naigenoo in his district. Coal exists, as I have said before, in the hills above Shahrood, about three miles from Tush, but not as far as I know anywhere else. It seemed good in quality, but it is unlikely ever to be of much use, as the cost of transport is too great.

Salt is found as an efflorescence all over the depres-

sions towards the desert, and there are probably many places which are called Wad by the Baloches, where it could be cut out in blocks. Smith mentions a range of hills, near the village of Kafir Kullah, on the road between Toorbut and Mushudd, exactly resembling the Salt Range on the Indus, which yield excellent salt, sold in large quantities at Mushudd and in neighbouring countries.

Regarding the "kuveers" of Persia I will only remark, that I am of opinion that there is no such thing as one continuous great salt desert, stretching, as has been supposed, from near Koom to Bejistoon; but there are a great number of smaller "kuveers" due to local drainage. That east of Koom, I suspect does not extend very far, and I should doubt if even the drainage of Semnoon emptied into it. The drainage of Damghan and Shahrood, probably forms one kuveer, or it may be swamp, for it is a fact that a "kuveer" is only a desiccated swamp or Hamoon, formed by the saline nature of the ground. The "kuveer" crossed by Buhsé in going from Yuzd to Damghan, is probably merely local, formed by the drainage of the immediate neighbourhood. I crossed a "kuveer" for fourteen miles, but it was clearly due to the local drainage of the Mehrjan and Beyaga tract. There is said to be another north of Khoon in Beeabunnuck, and there is certainly one south-east of Tubbus. The drainage of the Kul Murra also probably forms another "kuveer," and that of the Nishapoor basin certainly forms "kuveers" to the west of Goonasee, and is joined, I imagine, by the drainage of Bushrooya from the south.

I notice that Smith as well as Bellew is in error, not only in surmising that there is *one* "great salt desert, extending from Herat and Ghorian to Kushan and

Howz-y-Sooltan," but in supposing that there is any connection with the "kuveer" which they saw near Bejistoon, and any desert of Herat. In the first place, there can be no connection, as there is a range of hills between these points; and in the second, there is no "kuveer" anywhere in the basin of the Hurree Rood at all. According to Khanikoff, there is no "kuveer" in what he calls the "Desert of Lot," neither did I see any, nor could I hear of any in the tract between Birjund and Herat. The rivers here do not "kuveer," but they "hamoon," though no doubt, if for any reason the supply of water was to run short, these "hamoons," or as they are locally termed "daks," would soon form "kuveers."

The terms which Persians use in describing deserts have led to strange errors in our names for these tracts. They will tell you a tract is "Kuveer" or "Reeg," "Loot" or "Beyaboon;" the first implies that it is a salt waste, and this consequently is the worst description of desert there is, as not only is there no potable water there, but there never can be any, and it is absolutely without life or vegetation. The term "Reeg" means sand, and generally it is applied to completely sandy wastes; but these are not so hopeless in their nature as "kuveers," for not only is there some animal life, but on the very worst sand hills are often found growing a species of tamarisk, which affords good grazing for camels, and there is more than one instance of good water springing up from the midst of the most howling sandy waste.

"Loot" is another term applied to deserts, and I need not repeat that it has nothing to do with Lot or that gentleman's wife. I have always heard it applied to a perfect waste. "Loot" may have sand interspersed over its surface, but not kuveer, and it is generally sprinkled

with thorny shrubs, which afford grazing for camels. In a tract called "Loot" there is no water, but the soil is not saline, and does not therefore preclude the formation of "howzes," a very important point to note.

The term "Beyaboon" means waterless, but in common parlance it applies to a tract to which neither of the above terms, though both signify places which are waterless, would be applied. Thus, the parts between the stages on the road from Tubbus to Yuzd, were always termed "beyaboon," though there were some howzes existing, and many more in ruins; I may add that the same term was applied to the road between Goolwurda and Pahre though there were regular, if very distant, water places on it.

The animal productions of Khorassan are the horse, though not many of these are bred in the country, some ponies and mules, innumerable donkeys and sheep, and in the desert tracts also many camels. Of wild animals, the wild ass was seen by me in the deserts of Beeabunnuk, of the Zeerkoo, near Sungbust, and also near Jahjurm. I believe ibex, markhor, and oorial are found in the mountains, but I never saw any. In fact, I should think there was very little sport of any kind in the province.

I will now turn to the districts of Khorassan and give a short sketch of each. These are, as I have said above, as follows:— Shahrood, Bostam, Boojnoord, Koochoon, Durraguz, Kullat-y-Nadir, Mushudd, Nishapoor, Subzwar, Toorsheez, Toorbut, Jam, Uhaf, Tubbuswa, Toon and Ghaeen. The first of these, Shahrood, extends from Tush north-west of Shahrood, to the Kal Murra stream, a distance of 170 miles, and from the crest of the Khoosh Eylak range to far into the Kuveer, a distance of not less than seventy

miles, so that the area may be roughly 10,000 square miles.

That portion of this tract which is drained by the Shahrood is known as the Joolgah-y-Bostam, and this consists of a fine alluvial tract, with many large villages and much cultivation. To the east of this, at the foot of the outer spurs from the Khoosh Eylak, is a tract known as Joolgah-y-Muggus-Geelan, which is dry and arid, with little water.

The subdivisions of this district are:—*Zeristuk*, which comprises the west portion and all the principal villages in it; *Kohpaya*, which consists of all the country in the higher part of the hills on the north, and includes the villages of Abersich, Abre and Mojund; *Surhudd* consists of the upper part of the Bostam valley, and the hilly country above the Muggus, and that plain itself; *Beargomund* is the tract lying between the above and the desert; *Nurdeen*, a petty chiefship to the north of the Zurdawa ridge, and bordering on the Goorgan basin.

The inhabitants of this district are designated Arab-o-Ajam—Arabs and Persians—though there is a small proportion of Toorks. The first are the descendants of the Arab conquerors, but the three races have now fused so completely that they are undistinguishable in feature and language. One of the finest regiments in the Persian army is called the Arab-o-Ajam, and is celebrated for its valour.

The population of the district is estimated by Napier at only 32,000 souls, exclusive of Nurdeen, which may have 2,000 more. The force kept up numbers about 1,000 infantry and some 500 cavalry.

Of Boojnoord I have said something previously. It is inhabited by the Shahdeeloo Koords, who were trans-

ported to this frontier by Shah Abbas three hundred years ago. The Chief is termed the Eelkhanee, and his jurisdiction extends over Simulghan and Mana on the Attruk, Jahjurm and Isfuraeen, and is about 90 miles from E. to W., and 50 miles from N. to S. The tract inside the mountains is described as having a fertile soil and an ample water supply, but it is much cut up by difficult hills, which, however, furnish good pasturage, and often wide spaces of arable land. The parts situated, as Jahjurm and Isfuraeen, outside the hills, are parched and arid in the extreme, and could under no circumstances support a large population. The soil, however, is alluvial and fertile, and if there was sufficient water would, doubtless, repay its cultivation.

The total population is given by Napier at 28,500 souls, of which two-thirds are Koords, who occupy the land within the hills. The people of Jahjurm are Persian, and those of Isfuraeen Huzaras, only transplanted from the Herat mountains in 1857. The forces at the command of the Eelkhanee comprise about 1,000 horsemen of superior quality; 300 Shamkalchees, besides some 3,000 Koord villagers armed with matchlocks. Koochoon, Durraguz, and Kullat-y-Nadir, I have already described, and will not, therefore, say anything more on the subject.

The Mushudd district may be described as consisting of the basin of the Ab-y-Mushudd or Kushuff Rood.

The principal sub-divisions of this tract are Ardamah and Jaghark, situated to the SW. and W. in the Mehrabad range, with a population of 5,000 and 3,000 respectively, mostly of Persian origin. Bewajan, Shandiz, and Sir-y-jam, are situated to the south of Mushudd, and have altogether not more than 5,000 souls.

Meean Vilayut, Chinaran, and Ratkan, are further up the valley than the city, and are the principal sub-divisions of the district. In the first the population is principally Persian, but of the 20,000 souls, about one quarter are Taemoorees. Chinaran has 9,000 souls, mostly Zuffuranloo Koords, and Rathau has 7,000 souls also Koords of the Kaiwanloo branch.

To the north, on the Kullat road, is the little sub-division of Cholai, inhabited by some 2,500 Toorks; and to the N. and E. of Mushudd is Tabatkoon, a considerable sub-division, comprising all the lower part of the Kushuff Rood, and the south slope of the Kullat hills to Moozduran and Ak Durbund; the people are Koords of various tribes. The total population of the district does not, probably, amount to 150,000 souls, and the military force is estimated by Napier at four battalions of regular infantry, twenty light field guns, 3,500 irregular horse, and 10,000 irregular foot. The district produces very little more grain than is required for the consumption of the inhabitants, and the surplus only suffices to feed the troops, government servants, and the large number of pilgrims who visit the place. The supply of forage, too, is very limited, and there is even less fuel, while water is by no means abundant.

Nishapoor, to the west of Mushudd, on the opposite of the Beenaloh range, has a district attached to it about 80 miles each way. North and east it is bounded by the Mehrabad range, south by the Koh Soorkh, west by ridges from the first range, dividing it from Subzwar and Jouven. This district was formerly reckoned one of the most populous and fertile in Persia, but Napier describes it as being now, with the exception of a few favoured spots, "barren, parched, and forbidding in the extreme." The total estimated population does not

come up to 120,000. The principal sub-divisions are Sar-y-Vilayut, which has about 8,000 Toorks. It is situated in the hills in the direction of Sooltan Maidan. Maroush is another division in the same direction, inhabited by Koords; and the others are Taghan Koh, next Subzwar, and Jouven, 8,000; Ishkabad, 8,000; south-west of Nishapoor, Rewund, in which the town is situated 12,000; Durb-y-Kazee 24,000; Zubbur Khan 8,000; Durrood, to the east 12,000, and Oordkish, south of Nishapoor, with 8,000. In the north part of the district the people are Koords, below chiefly Beyat Toorks mixed with Persians; and there are, strange to say, 1,000 tents of Baloche nomads. The district, notwithstanding its former prosperity, has at the present day but few resources. Its out-turn in grain but barely suffices to feed the people; and here, as nearly everywhere else, forage and fuel are very scarce, though water is more abundant. The forces of the district are all irregular, numbering not more than 5,000 men, but these are mostly Toorks of good physique and fairly armed.

The district of Subzwar lies to the west of Nishapoor, and it consists of a narrow plain between the Jagatar mountains on the north, and the Koh Meesh on the south. To the east it is divided from Nishapoor by a low, barren ridge, which connects the two above-mentioned ranges, and on the west it has a desolate tract bordering on "Kuveer." Its length is about 75 miles, and its breadth 40, giving its area about 3,000 square miles. The northern part near the hills is fertile, cultivation being carried on by Kunats. The population may amount to 45,000 souls, and principally consists of Persians, with some Koord, Toork, and Baloche nomads. There are no troops in the district, but the

armed peasantry might furnish some 8,000 men—all supplies are very scarce throughout the district.

Next comes the district of Subzwar, and a small division called Jouven or Jugatai, which, however, is very productive, owing to its having a good amount of water. The area of this tract may be about 1,100 square miles, and the population about 11,000. The last are mostly Toorks, who can turn out some 800 matchlockmen of a superior stamp.

Lying next the desert is the little district of Toorsheez, a small part of which is said to be very productive, abounding with fruits of all descriptions. The grapes and pomegranates of Toorsheez, are unsurpassed by any in Persia. The inhabitants are chiefly of Arab descent, but there are many nomads of Baloche extraction, the whole number of the population, however, not reaching more than 20,000. The southern and most direct road from Tehran to Herat passes through this district. Bellew, who passed close to it, gives no information regarding it, which is to be regretted, as there is doubt as to its exact position. The district of Toorbut Haiduree comes next. Its southern boundary is said by Bellew to extend to the right bank of the river at Yoomisee, and its northern would seem to reach to about the Gudar-y-Bukh; on the east its limit is the Bakhurz range, but I cannot make out how far it extends to the west, or how its boundary with Toorsheez Khaf runs. Bellew says, it comprises the sub-divisions of Mahawullat Toorbut, Záwah, Kháf, Bayak, Rukh, and Azkund. I think, however, it may be doubted if the latter belongs to Toorbut, Khaf certainly does not. The population is roughly estimated by Napier at 25,000 souls, of whom the Karai, a Toork tribe said to have been brought here by Timour, are the paramount race, the rest being of

Arab and Persian origin, with some Baloche nomads. The chief of the Karai, is one Hadjee Mirza Mahmood Khan.

Bakhurz is a small district which I passed through on the road to Mushudd. It is bounded north by the Kulla Minar ridge, west by the Bakhurz range, east by the Koo-y-Birs, which divides it from Jam, and on the south by a long slope which comes out from the Kurrat Koh to the Hurree Rood, including Kareez. The lower portion of this district is simply a barren, stony waste, sloping like a glacier down from the hills; but above Shuhr-y-Now, in the plain and in the hills about Kulla Minar, there is a very fine tract of country, which only requires labour to make it very productive, as the soil is good, and there is abundance of water.

The principal village of Bakhurz is Shuhr-y-Now, which is dilapidated as usual, but has been laid out with some attempt at regularity.

The population numbers about 16,000 souls, chiefly Huzaras brought here from the hills round Herat; and the chief has at his disposal a body of 200 inferior horse, while nearly all the adult males are armed with matchlocks. My old friend the Surteep, Abbass Khan, was formerly governor of this district, but he has been, as related above, transferred to Surrukhs.

The little district of Jam lies to the north and east of Bakhurz, from which it is divided on the west by the Birs range. Its eastern boundary goes up to the Hurree Rood, and is that of Persia in this direction, and its north boundary is quite undefined, but may be roughly put at the crest of the Koo-Chahl Sung or Yoghur, which divides its drainage from that of the Mushudd River. Its principal villages are Toorbut-y-Shekh, Jam, Furreemoon, Kullundurabad, and Hussunabad.

The population may number 12,000 souls, consisting chiefly of Taemoorees, with some Heratees, and a local tribe known as Jamees, of Persian origin. A body of some 800 inferior horsemen is kept up, and besides, the services of perhaps 2,000 matchlock men would be forthcoming.

Khaf, also a Taemooree chiefship, consists of the country bounded north by the Kurrat Koh, south by a desert waste, east by Afghan territory, and west by the districts of Tubbus and Ghaeen. This tract consists of bare, stony hills, and desolate slopes, with very few patches of cultivation round the villages, the chief of which are Kooee and Nusseerabad. The population consists of about 15,000 souls, who are called on to furnish 300 horsemen, but who could turn out some 2,000 more matchlockmen.

The district of Tubbus-wa-Toon is very extensive, running, as it does, from Poosht-y-Buddam on the south-west to Yoonusee on the north-east, and from the crest of the Kullat range to Chah Mehjee below Surayoon. It is nearly all a desert, the hills being equally unproductive with the plains, and it is only in the small tracts round Tubbus, Bushrooya, Toon, Goonabad, Kakh and Bejistoon, which are the names of its sub-divisions, that there is, or can be, any cultivation. The population may number in all 30,000 souls. The family of the chief Hadjee, Mahamad Bakur Alee Khan, is of Arab origin, but the rest are mostly Persians, with some Baloche nomads. The people are unwarlike, and though perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 matchlockmen could be collected, they would be of little service. The fact is, that except in the Bejistoon and Goonabad sub-divisions the district is so cut off by deserts that they are little troubled with Toorkmuns,

and since the strong rule of the Amir of Ghaeen has been introduced, they are freed from fear of Baloche raids also.

The next and last district of Khorassan is that of Ghaeen, to which has lately been added the Persian and best portion of Seestan.

The Amirate of Ghaeen is bounded on the north by a ridge which runs out from the Kullat range, between the Ghaeen sub-division of Neembolook and the Tubbus division of Kakh and Goonabad. On the west the boundary goes up to the crest of the Kullat range, as far south as the point whence the spur over which lies the Godur-y-Goad pass is given out. There it crosses this range and takes in all the hilly country, and as much of the plains as the water reaches to, up to the desert. The southern boundary also extends in the same manner to the Loot desert, and on the east is that of Persia and Afghanistan. The length of this is about 250 miles, and the breadth about 200 miles.

The district, in its general aspect, is as forbidding as most of the rest of Persia, brown burnt hills, long glacis-like slopes covered with stones, with a few patches of green round the villages.

The divisions are Neembolook on the extreme north, then Ghaeen, the most fertile of all, Sehdeh or Alghose, consisting of the tract between the Khooneek and Samun Shakee passes which drain westward, Birjund, which consists of the basin drained from the Momeenabad and Bageeran ranges as far down as Birjund; beyond which is a fine tract called Khoosf-Neh, which comprises all the southern hills to the desert. Sooneekhana, the principal village in which is Foorg, and which may be said to consist of the valley between the

Guzeek and Momeenabad, and finally Zeerkoh, which is mostly a howling desert, but has some oases, as Doroksh, and Charakhs; this tract is supposed to contain Yezdoon, but the country is far too dangerous to make this outlying post a desirable place to visit even for revenue.

The inhabitants of Ghaeen, judging from that of Birjund and Ghaeen, and the reported populousness of some villages to the west, as Khoosf Khon, Afrees and others, cannot number less than 80,000 souls. These are of mixed races, some are Arab, others clearly Persian, while those of the Soonekhana tract are Afghan, and those to the south Baloche.

Meer Alum Khan, Amir of Ghaeen, Hushmutt-oo-Dowlah, and general in the Persian service, is probably the most powerful, as he certainly is the most able chief in Khorassan. He maintains a force of 11 guns, one of which is an 18-pounder, the others being 9-pounders and 6-pounders, 2,000 cavalry, and 2,000 regular infantry, besides which he could raise 5,000 irregular matchlockmen; but these numbers are inclusive of the force in Seestan.

The portion of Seestan which is now under Meer Alum Khan consists of all south of the Naizar or Reed swamp of the Hamoon, and all on the left bank of the Helmund up to Kohuk, from which place a line drawn to the Mullick Seeah Koo is the boundary.

The question as to the right of Persia to Seestan has been fully reported on by Sir Frederick Goldsmid, who had the very invidious and thankless task of arbitrating upon it, as between the Afghans and Persians.

The only remark, therefore, that I shall make is, that as both Persians and Afghans were profoundly dissatisfied with the decision, it is reasonable to assume that

it was probably the best that could have been arrived at.

But the history of the claims of the Persians to a country from which they had very long withdrawn is instructive, and it may not, therefore, be out of place to say a few words here about it.

The history of Seestan may be summarized thus:—In 1747 Nadir Shah died, and up to his death, not only Seestan, but the greater part of Afghanistan acknowledged his rule. After his death, Ahmad Shah, Durani, conquered the whole of Afghanistan, clearly including Seestan. Seestan also undoubtedly paid tribute to him and his successor, Timur Shah, who died in 1793. Then succeeded a blank of forty years, during which the Afghans, too much occupied with their own quarrels, paid no attention to Seestan, which consequently became practically independent; but during this period they (the Afghans) never relinquished their claim on it. In 1834, Kamran reconquered Seestan for Herat. In 1845, Kohandil reconquered the east portion of the same country for Kandahar.

Commencing from 1851, Persia had manifested a continually increasing tendency to revive her pretensions to the recovery of the ground lost to the east since the death of Nadir Shah, and these pretensions increased till in 1857 the Persians laid siege to and captured Herat. When they advanced on Herat, Ahmad Khan, son of Shah Pasand, threw in his lot with them, and allowed them to store Lash with grain, and even to occupy it and Jorven with a force. On the termination of the Persian war in 1857, Major Taylor was sent to Herat to see that the stipulations of the treaty were duly executed. He reported that they were not, and among other evasions that the province of Lash Jorven had not

been evacuated. A correspondence then ensued between the British and Persian Governments, the latter constantly protesting that Lash was Persian territory. When at last the Persians submitted to the urgent representations of the British Ambassador, they did so in these terms:—

"But as your Excellency is so urgent on this subject, and a continued persistence in requiring an investigation and inquiry would doubtless be attributed to other motives and views on the part of the Persian ministers, whose object being purely and sincerely to possess the friendship of the British Government, they are perfectly free, merely to gratify the British ministers and to co-operate with your Excellency, and that not the least point in amity and union may be omitted, they will make over Lash and Jorven, the unquestionable territory of Persia, to Sirdar Ahmad Khan (son of Shah Pasand Khan), in whose hands they formerly were, and the Persian authorities will be withdrawn from these places."

Wearied of being made a bone of contention between Herat and Kandahar, Ali Khan (brother of Mahamad Reza of Sehkuha) went to Tehran, and eventually in 1857–58 succeeded in contracting an alliance with a Kujur Princess, giving in his allegiance to the Persian King in return for this honour.

In the spring of 1858, Ali Khan was to have returned with a body of Persian troops. On the representation, however, of the British Minister, the Persian Government abandoned this idea, but in their reply did not relinquish their claim to Seestan, which they put in these words:—

"The Persian ministers have always considered, and do now consider, that Seestan, *ab antiquâ*, has formed an

integral part of the Persian territory, and it is at the present time in the possession of the Persian Government, on whose part it is therefore not necessary that troops or soldiers should be sent, or a new occupation of the place effected."

Mr. Murray again remonstrated, and informed the Persian Government that the sending of troops to Seestan would be considered as a direct violation of the treaty of Paris. On this the Persian Government sent only "a small escort," with the Kujur Princess, Ali Khan's wife; but with it went a drill instructor as well as tools for coining money. When Ali Khan reached Seestan, a regiment was raised and drilled, and money coined in the name of the Shah of Persia. Taj Mahamad Khan, son of Mahamad Reza, now headed a revolt and assassinated Ali Khan, and the Persian Government then came forward with a proposal to send a force to punish Taj Mahamad. They were, however, again induced to withdraw this project on the reiterated assertion of the British Minister, that to do so would be considered a direct violation of the treaty of Paris. While yielding, however, they again persisted in laying claim to Seestan as an appanage of Persia. Taj Mahamad after this, of his own free will, appears to have offered to accept and fulfil all the engagements made by the late Khan, if he was recognized as Chief of Seestan. This proposal was acceded to, and the Shah granted him the pay and title conferred on Ali Khan. Taj Mahamad Khan sent his brother as a hostage to Tehran, and Ibrahim Khan and other chiefs also sent their sons to reside at the Persian capital as a guarantee of their good faith. From 1861 to 1863, the Persians continued to claim Seestan, saying they only refrained from enforcing their rights from fear of offending the British, but that they could never

permit the Afghans to take possession, which they feared they meant to. The correspondence which passed on this subject is not free from tediousness, nor is it of material importance, but on the 5th November, 1863, Lord Russell wrote a letter, in which in the following terms he implied the permission of the British Government to the Persians, to assert their right to Seestan by force of arms. "I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency in reply, that Her Majesty's Government, being informed that the title to the territory of Seestan is disputed between Persia and Afghanistan, must decline to interfere in the matter, and must leave it to both parties to make good their pretensions by force of arms."

No notice, however, seems to have been taken of this permission, till the end of 1865, when the Persian Government, taking advantage of a reported threat of the Afghans in Seestan, marched a force from Mushudd, which arrived in Seestan in April 1866, and consisted, according to different accounts, of from 4,000 to 10,000 men. They then destroyed the fort of Sehkuha and some smaller forts, and levied a tax of one in forty on cattle. In fact they took possession of this portion of that country. This brings us to the end of 1867.

After this, though the dates are not stated, they deprived Ibrahim Khan of Shek Nasur, of much of his territory, taking Jalalabad, Jahanabad and Nadali, and they then advanced as far as Husenabad.

The Shah's Government, notwithstanding these acts, still disavowed all knowledge of a participation in these movements in Seestan.

Several raids were during 1869 reported to have been committed by the Seestanis, acting under the

orders of the Persian commanders on Kandahar territory. The Afghans under orders from the Amir, behaved with a marvellous forbearance throughout all these raids.

Arbitration was then proposed, and Persia has agreed to it on condition of being allowed to retain all that part of Seestan acquired by her since Lord Russell's letter of November, 1863, which she considered to have given her the right of settling the question by force of arms.

CHAPTER. IV.

SHAHROOD TO LONDON.

On the 4th September, I got away from Shahrood, but when we got outside the gates one of the muleteers absolutely refused to proceed. However, as the other called him names and declared himself quite willing to accompany me, I let him stop, and I have no doubt his moment of repentance came in due course.

Leaving by the gate on the north, the road first goes through a low and rocky pass, over a ridge for one mile, then turning 272°, it goes over an open but rather stony plain for seven miles further, passing the village of Kullat at the fourth mile. It then enters a valley, three miles wide, with hills on either side, those on the right being called Koh Shahbar, and those on the left named Koh Tuppeh, were close to the road. Continuing up this valley for seven miles more, the road turned more north, and one mile further on it left the valley, and ascended easily over a spur from the Shahbar range, and then descended in the next mile to the river bed again, which had here abundance of water, about three feet deep and flowing in a strong current. This point, where there were two ruined "robats," forms the boundary between Shahrood and Astrabad jurisdiction. There is an excellent site for a camp at this place, with abundance of water, fuel and forage. The road now turns 350° for half a mile and then 305°, and goes up a

narrow glen. Keeping the hill-side on the left bank of the stream for three-quarters of a mile, where a ruined serai, called "Rabat Marghazar," is situated on the right bank, just below the junction of the two streams, one from Tush, and the other the Gundab from the Chehchalean pass.

Taking the Tush valley we went on 320° for half a mile, and then turned up, in a direction 6°, a little side glen, at the head of which, half a mile up, was the valley of Tush.

This is a small place, with some fifty wretched hovels, and a little cultivation. There is, however, good water here, and some supplies are procurable. I was given a very decent room in the headman's house. About three miles north of this village coal, which is called Sung-y-Zukkal, is found. It is said to be plentiful, and as far as I could judge from the specimen I burnt, seemed of good quality. The headman said that some six years ago, the Russians sent an officer here, who took away 100 loads of 35 Tabrez maunds each, for which they paid for the hire of transport to Guz, eight krans per load, besides the cost of the labour of excavation. As they never came again, it may be supposed they either found the coal inferior, or the cost of transport too high; the latter is probably the case, as it must have cost them nearly £3 a ton at the Caspian.

I had intended going from this place direct to Astrabad, by the Wajmenoo Kotul and Karasoo, but I changed my mind and determined to go by way of Shahkoh and Zeerutt. The road bends back from Tush for a mile to near the junction of the two rivers, at the Rabat Marghazar above mentioned—just before reaching which, instead of going round, it crosses over

a low spur dividing the two valleys. It then goes for four miles up the western glen, to a place called Gundab, from which it takes its name. Here there is plenty of fuel and forage, and some cultivation, but the water smells horribly. On from this the road goes west for four miles, by a very easy ascent over earthy slopes to the top of the Kotul-Chehlchaleean, whence there is a splendid view down the valley; upon the left is a magnificent scarped hill, called Koh Benar.

Thence the road goes down the valley, generally due west (but turning more south for half a mile in the descent), for three miles to a mill, when it turns north, and ascends to the village of Shahkoh Bala by a narrow breakneck path.

Shahkoh is about the worst looking place I have seen, even in Persia, which is saying a good deal for it. It consists of about eighty houses built on the side of a bare burnt-up red hill, without a sign of a green thing, tree, grass, or cultivation, near. It is at least one mile from its water supply as well as from its fields, which are in the valley below, and can only have been built up here to get out of the way of the road. It is very high up, but the inhabitants say that owing to its sheltered situation, surrounded by high hills, it is not cold in winter. There is no coal near this village.

Shahkoh Paeen, another village situated down the valley, about three miles, is probably a much nicer place. The river of this valley is called the Kurtaroo, and is said to flow below Ratkan, and thence on to the Caspian, west of Ushruff. It is joined below Shahkoh Paeen by another large stream, which flows through a district or valley, called Char-bagh, and rises from the main range near the Wajmenoo Kotul.

The direct road from Shahrood to Bandur Guz, is by

—1. Marghazar (as above), 2. Aragee down the valley of the Kurtaroo, to two miles below Shahkoh Paeen, 3. Bar Kulla, down the valley to below Ratkan, 4. Guz Bandur. Over the hills the road from Tush, which I did not follow, goes to Rabat-y-Sufeid. First there is an easy ascent of four miles to the top of the Kotul Wajmenoo, and an equally easy descent of about twelve miles down a valley. There are no supplies here. Thence Astrabad is about twenty miles distant, the road going for two miles to the Kotul Koozlook, whence there is a nasty ascent over the pass to the old site of the village of Koozlook now deserted, whence the road is level through a forest into Astrabad.

The road I took, went over the hill, north of Shahkoh Bala, and then descended by a steep but easy path over earth to the pretty Charbagh valley in four miles. It then goes down this valley, which has abundance of water, a splendid soil, but only a few inhabitants, for three miles to a place called Shaheebad, whence it ascends for three more up the Taloo pass, which is on a spur dividing the drainage of the Kartaroo from that which goes past Zeearutt. The first half of this ascent is not very difficult, but then it becomes simply frightful. Unluckily the day was cloudy, or I daresay I should have had a fine view of the Astrabad plain from this commanding height. As it was, there was nothing but a confused mass of jungle-clad hills which it was impossible to unravel, very like Bhotan.

From this pass, the road descends easily for one and a half miles, and then winds round the contour of the hill in a direction 15°, through a thick forest of oak and juniper for four miles, passing numerous little encampments of nomads, and clearings, but no village. Then it descends down the precipitous sides of the

hills by very steep short zigzags, over excessively slippery clay, and all through dense forest for miles. It was quite out of the question to attempt to ride, so I got off and walked leading my horse. Going down, down, down by this infernal breakneck path, and not able to see fifty yards ahead anywhere, we at last reached a stream. But it was by this time dark; I could not see my watch, and the road led now over boulders, now over a level terrace, now over a short sharp ascent, then in the water, so that it was quite impossible to arrive at any idea of the distance covered before we got to Zeearutt. At all events it was 10 P.M. before we reached our destination. I turned at once into a house which the guide said I could use, and without waiting for any of my things, spread my blanket, put my saddle under my head, and was soon fast asleep. We had had a tremendous day, starting about 3 A.M., we had been going, except for a short halt at Shahkoh, till 10 P.M.—19 hours. During that time we had crossed three passes, none of which could have been under 9,000 feet above the sea, and about half the road was of that breakneck order that it is quite impossible to avoid the conclusion that Dame Nature must have been in a most vile temper when she laid out that bit of country. I do not mind saying that on that day I was regularly done. But if it was a hard day for me, what must it have been for the mules? I was sound asleep before they came up, but next morning on waking I found my incomparable muleteer sitting smoking as if he had only had a little outing the day before. How they got down that road in the dark I do not know, I cannot conceive, but they did it. Wherever I have been in Persia it has always been the same with my muleteers; whether in my trying march across the desert, from

Beeabunnuck, or across the Zeerkoh tract, as here, they have always at the end "turned up smiling." They never made difficulties, never grumbled at hard work, never lagged behind, in fact never behaved as if they were Persians at all.

When I got to the village the night before, I knew that the Russian Consul was there, but at that moment if my own father had sent a message to say that one of those little dinners he knew so well how to order was waiting, if I had known there was a delicious big bed with clean sheets, and the most beautiful "houri" in creation to lull me to sleep, I would not have gone. I was quite beyond food, or houris, or comfort, and so as I have said, I flung myself on the ground and despite a stone in the small of my back forgot everything.

I therefore make no apologies to the Russian Consul (one can't be expected to remember Russian names), for not going to see him that night. However, next morning, the 7th of September, after sending off my baggage, I paid him a visit. I do not know whether the worthy representative of the Ak-Padshah,* had been having a curtain lecture, or whether his dignity was hurt, but he was at first evidently on the stilts. This, however, soon wore off, and we got pretty friendly over a cup of tea.

He was living in very primitive style in a native hut *pur et simple*, but had Madame with him, and an elderly female attendant, who looked very much as if she felt like a fly in amber, and wondered how the deuce she had got there. It must indeed have been strange for her, for anything more different from the hideous bleak plains of her native Russia than this lovely forest-covered mountain glen, cannot be imagined.

* White Emperor.

Our only medium of conversation was Persian, but we managed with this well enough. It was from this gentleman that I first heard of the outbreak in the Herzegovina; and I thought he communicated the intelligence with rather a meaning smile, as if he thought it would lead to more than I dreamt of at the moment. And here too, I heard of Colonel Baker's affair, and it gave me quite a shock. For the last three months I had followed in Baker's footsteps, and everywhere I had heard nothing but good of him, everywhere learnt that his journey and his conduct had greatly raised the English name in these wild countries, and now to think that such a man in a moment of weakness had so fallen, was indeed a blow to my national *amour propre*.

The road on leaving led down the stony bed of the river for eight miles, and was simply execrable. Then leaving the river it went through dense forest to within two miles of Astrabad. Here I was met by the British Agent, a Persian, who very kindly conducted me to quarters prepared for me in his own house.

Astrabad seemed to me, who had got so accustomed to the dreary-looking cities of Persia, a most picturesque looking-place. Lying at the foot of fine forest-clad hills, and surrounded by trees, its situation is very pretty, and the pent roofs covered with red tiles enhance the general effect; also while passing through the streets I noticed a custom of putting flower-pots in the windows, much the same as one sees in Europe.

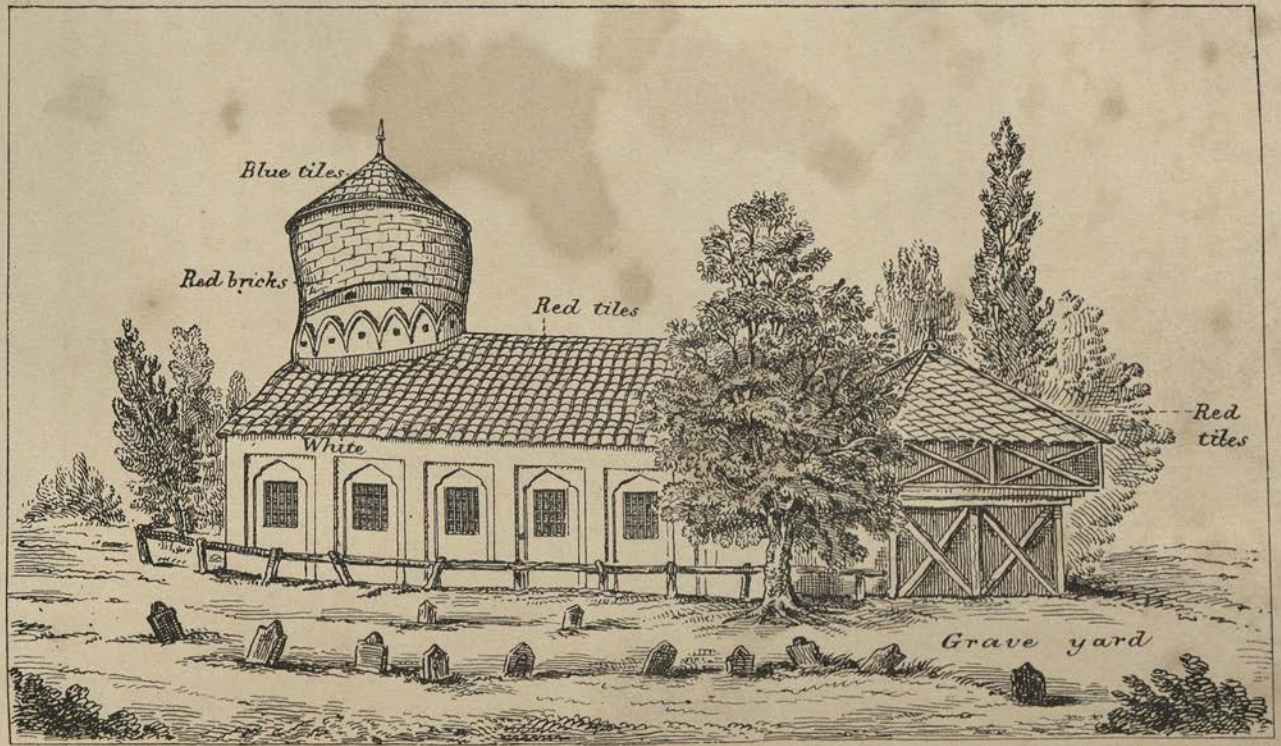
It is situated on a little river, the Astaisoo, which drains to the Karasoo, and is enclosed within an imposing and once strong mud wall, now however in ruins. All round too are the remains of a ditch, and there are strong towers at intervals, but the town is

completely commanded by a spur from the main range, which comes down to the west, and all round there is cover within a few yards. This last, however, if judiciously placed, might add immensely to the strength of the place, as it consists of thick, in fact perfectly impervious, thorn-bush, called here I believe, Pahlwan-y-Muzunduroon, which nothing could get through, and which it would be extremely difficult to cut and impossible to burn.

There are three gates to the town of Astrabad, but numberless ways in, which may be called Durwaza Iranee. The gates are called the Shahrood on the south, Mazundaran on the west, and Goorjan, or as it is sometimes called Chahl Dookhtur, on the north. There are only about 1,200 houses inhabited, though the space enclosed in the walls is very large, and capable of holding ten times that number. All the rest is taken up with waste ground, rubbish heaps, graveyards, jungle, and gardens.

The whole place is quite unlike anything else I had yet seen in Persia, and the people also were clearly a different race. We no longer saw the neat lambswool "koolla," and the tight-fitting blue frock coat; but instead, the people wore huge brown sheepskin hats, with loose brown woollen coats and trousers, leg bandages such as are worn in Cashmeer, and regular sandals like those of Peshawur.

I went about the streets a good deal while here, though it was very hot in the daytime; at night there were myriads of mosquitos. I did not go to see the Governor, but an individual who was called the "Bullyoos" came on a mission from that potentate to find out all about me. He was a talkative, but pleasant enough, man, and very civilly told off some of his furashes to



II. MOSQUE AT ROSHUNABAD. [To face page 163.

look after me. No doubt these men were put on to me a good deal as spies, but as I had nothing to conceal, I was glad of their company in going through the streets.

While I was here there were two regiments and six guns. The infantry were the regiment of Arab-o-Ajam and the Geroos battalion. I made the acquaintance of the officers, and had long talks with the men. They were encamped outside the south wall, and the prevalence of raised platforms for sleeping showed that they suffered much from fever.

The place seems to have no manufactures, and though I hunted everywhere for curiosities, all I could get was a very nice dagger. However, I managed also to pick up a couple of very good Toorkmun carpets here. These are quite different from the Persian carpets in pattern and colour, though they are made in the same way. The predominating colours are not so bright as the Persian carpets, and consist chiefly of a Turkey red, black, white, and sometimes dark blue.

On the 10th, I left Astrabad for Bundur Guz, and marched sixteen miles to Koord Muhulla The road goes due west and is quite level the whole way, at first piercing a very impenetrable thorn jungle, through which a path has been cut, and then through forest. At four miles the village of Aneraj is passed, at six miles that of Vurtan, and at eight miles is Kulla Jan, and then we came to Roshunabad, where there is a mosque, which reminds one very much of a church.

At twelve miles we passed the picturesque village of Durra Mean, situated on the hill slope two miles off to the left; at sixteen miles we reached our stage.

The country passed through was either dense forest of regular Terai-like character, or else thick bramble

jungle with occasional clearings. Of the culturable capabilities of this country, I should say there could be no manner of doubt. Cotton, tobacco, corn and rice, could be produced to any amount, and the lower hills are just the sort of country that tea is grown on in the Darjeeling Terai. But all this requires what I fear it will never get as long as it belongs to Persia, viz., population, good government, capital, and enterprise.

This village of Koord Muhulla seems to be very unhealthy. It is surrounded by swamps and terai jungle. While going through it to my manzil, I met two dead bodies being carried, and it gave me an awful turn to see a third being washed in the stream which furnished the drinking water for the village. In the evening the headman came and said six people had died that day; on which I said, that "Moord Kulla," would seem to be a more appropriate name for it than Koord Muhulla, but the pun called forth no response.

Though my quarters were as good as they could furnish, I had a "night of it." I never slept one solitary wink. It was a night that might have given infinite pleasure to an entomologist, from the number and variety of the insect world that collected on my poor body, but having myself no mania for insectology it simply drove me almost mad.

However, next morning we got off, and going through the same dense jungle, interspersed with swamps and clearings, we came to the village of Guz in about thirteen miles, and thence by a narrow path, through swampy ground and over some very nasty streams with treacherous quagmire bottoms for three and a half miles, when we came out on the shore of the Caspian, and turning to the left, arrived, at about the sixteenth mile, at Bundur Guz, the principal port on the south-east of that sea.

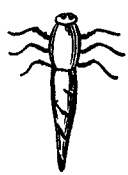
Whatever its future may be, the Bundur of Guz is not now an imposing port, either with reference to its public buildings or its commercial establishments. It consists of eight or nine houses, built out of packing cases, and a very dangerous and wretchedly constructed pile pier, which runs out into water deep enough for a ship's boat to come alongside. Besides, there is a caravanserai built on a good plan, which if only kept decently clean, would be comfortable enough.

The "Bullyoos" at Astrabad had told me to go to Mirza Sooleiman, whom he said I should find a very good fellow, and very glad to put me up. I found him to be a very good fellow, but I found that if he "put me up," he would have to put his wife up a platform erected on trees, so I declined.

Then I went to the Russian agent of the Mercurial and Caucasian S. S. N. Co. Limited; but, finding he did not jump at the idea of having a gentleman in his house, I went to an Armenian merchant who had greeted me on my way in. This man was very civil, and said he would do anything for me, but when he showed me my bedroom, I realized that it was simply a box six feet square, with only one hole six inches square for air, that it was fearfully hot, that, to put it mildly, it had a certain bouquet, and finding I should be depriving him of the pleasure of living in it, I "got out of it," both literally and metaphorically.

In despair, I now went to the caravanserai. I had been warned against it, I had been told that the mosquitos were bad and the fleas worse; but I was obliged to stay somewhere, though the smell was somewhat ammoniacal. The rooms were a good size, and I thought I had been agreeably disappointed on the whole. But what I suffered in the two nights I was there, would require

the pen of Hugo to describe, the pencil of Doré to portray. It is perhaps better that I should draw a veil over those hours of agony, and not unnecessarily harass the reader's feelings. I cannot, however, refrain from placing it on record that the mosquitos were about the size of camels, the fleas could not have been smaller than cats, and that there was another insect, whose name is unknown to me, and whose habits are, I hope, unknown to every one. It had a head, all made up of eyes, a body like an ordinary fly, and a tail like a gimlet. It never made any noise, and it always attacked to the rear, and once it had got its gimlet into you, it seemed to afford it such pleasure that it invariably parted with its life



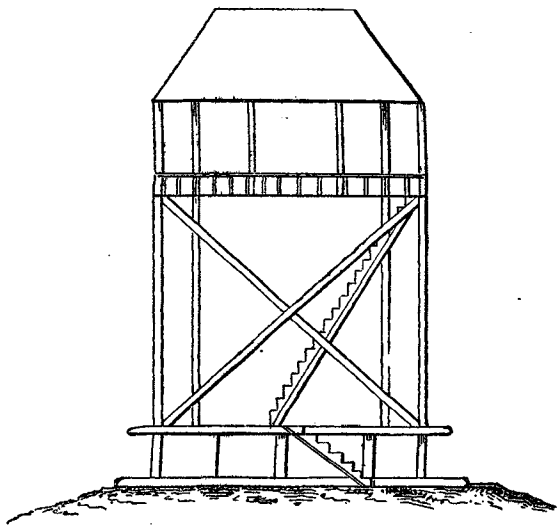
sooner than let go. But its effects were not realized till after its death; then came on an itching pain that nearly drove one mad.

After a tub, I went over to breakfast with the Russian agent, and luckily there found an individual who talked Persian. The house, which was the principal mansion in the place, consisted of one room about eight feet square, and two or three cupboards where a short man might get in, if he did not want to stretch his legs; but unfortunately, the one room was considered too grand to be used, so we breakfasted on a raised platform which is used in Muzunderan for sleeping in, and is called a "tullar."

First there is a low platform of heavy timbers about

three feet high, and then on that is erected another, which may be of any height, but is generally about twelve feet above the other. The top of this is boarded, surrounded by a railing, and covered with a thatched roof, and is reached by a ladder. They form very pleasant sleeping places, as they are here erected so as to catch the whole of the sea breeze.

Our breakfast was very fair. The company consisted



of the agent, a small man with a cunning face and a bullet head, a lady of unknown connection with any one, and my friend who spoke Persian, whose name was Alexandre Vasilivitch Sevaragin. I don't think he was a Russian pure.

After breakfast, Alexandre volunteered to take me on board the *Teulen*, a Russian gunboat which was lying off the place. The commander of this vessel was a very fine, manly, determined-looking, fellow, I never

could quite catch his name, but it sounded so like Cuts-with-Gough, that I adopted this patronymic for him. His gunboat was an old-fashioned wooden boat, like those which I remember in China in 1860, and though I daresay it was not in spicy enough order to have pleased a smart British naval officer, it seemed to me that all the essentials were well looked after. The crew were a very fine lot of men, and altogether I would sooner be friends with the gallant commander than an enemy. On leaving he asked me, through Alexandre, to come to breakfast next morning.

We then went on board a merchant vessel called the

Shah, with a Russo-German captain, named Pavloff, who could talk a "leetle Engleesh," and was dressed in nautical fashion. He was an awfully good fellow, but so fat that it seemed as if a slight prick would cause the whole skin to collapse. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing my own language again, and we made great friends. I had a delightful swim from the ship before I left. I tried hard to get the Captain to come into the water, but he said he could not "sweem," yet looking at him it seemed impossible that he should ever sink. When I left he came with me as he said, "I go proveesion seek."

So this day passed off, and fearing another night at

the caravanserai, I got Captain Pavloff to let me come and sleep on board, to which he most kindly assented.

As there seemed to be no chance of the steamer's coming in I determined to take advantage of the delay, to go over the hill to see Ratkan, where I had heard the Russians had a sanatarium; on inquiring, however, I found there never had been any establishment there, but that a former Russian consul had been in the habit of going up there in the summer.

I went about eleven, after a glorious header and swim from the *Shah*, on board the *Teulen*, where my friend Cuts-with-Gough was ready waiting. Most unfortunately, however, Alexandre could not come with me, so as Captain C. only knew the three words oui, non, and bon, in French, and I knew no Russian, our conversation was naturally limited. However, we made up for it by abundance of signs and laughing, and the worthy commander was most pressing in his hospitality. The food though simple was capital, and there was abundance of tea, vodkee, and some of the sour Caucasian wine called Kakhetee.

I tried to make Captain Cuts-with-Gough understand that I should be very glad if he would accompany me to Ratkan next day, but I could not, so I was obliged to wait till we went on shore and got hold of Alexandre.

When it was explained to him, with the addition that I would mount and feed him all the way, he said he was much obliged, but he had never been on a horse in his life, and he should not like to risk it, he would only tumble off and be a nuisance to me. I tried to assure him this would not be the case, but it was no good, and none of the others would come. As a last resort I asked Captain Pavloff, who had mentioned his riding, but he said he should like it, but it was too far, for

though he rode, when he rode too far he became "very seek here," rubbing his hands over his enormous thighs.

I could not consent to remain at this detestable place longer, so next morning, the 13th, I started. After going through the forest for some six miles, there was a very long and steep ascent over a slippery clay soil to the top of the ridge overlooking the Caspian, and then a descent equally steep, into the valley which I had entered at its head at Shahkoh. Here we first came across a villager ploughing in his fields, and when asked where Ratkan was, he said we had come entirely out of the way, that now we should have to go up the valley for three miles, and then ascend to that village.

Following his directions we did not reach the village of Ratkan till nearly dark. On the way up we passed one of those towers which seem to be scattered about Persia, and which seem to date from the Kufic period. I have described one I saw near Ubburrkoh, and I believe there is also one at the village of Ratkan, on the road between Mushudd and Koochoon.

During the night it came on to rain heavily, but stopped towards morning. I had intended remaining here a day, but what I had seen of the road the day before convinced me it was likely to be very difficult indeed after rain, and that I might not be able to get into Guz in one day.

I took good care to get a better guide this time, and we started very early by a very much better road, to the top of the ridge. The soil on this side was more stony, but directly we began descending our difficulties commenced and continued the whole way down. In parts the road was simply a slide, long greasy mud slopes at an angle of 45°; in others it was a quagmire;

but worst of all, were some places where the mud of the quagmire was not so much dissolved, but was still soft enough to let animals sink each leg in to above the hock. No one tries to improve a road in Persia, or even takes the trouble to go round bad bits, but contents himself with thinking if it is his "Kismut" to get over it, he will do so. Consequently, there were a number of these places, which I can best describe by likening them to honeycombs in the mud, and after the rain the slosh had quite covered up the mouths of the holes, so whenever we came to a quagmire, we knew we were in for it. Two or three times my riding boots were pulled clean off me and I sunk over the knees, and tumbled in the mud times without number. How the mules got over it I don't know, but they did, though they fell continually, and all my things were covered with one black mass of sticky mud. Fortunately none of them broke their bones or even were lamed; for which reason, I can only say with the Persians, it was our kismut to perform this wonderful feat, and so we did it.

I have never accomplished a worse bit of road than that ten miles. At first I was inclined to take things cheerfully; then the constant recurrence of these execrable pit-falls angered me. But that was of little use, and so at last I became quite apathetic. Among other difficulties was the passage of a swollen mountain torrent. This was a real danger, in fact, so little did I like the look of it that I told my men they might stay till it went down; as for me, the thought that I should miss the steamer and have to spend more nights with the fly with the gimlet tail would have nerved me to even greater dangers. So dismounting, the guide (who was a good strong fellow) and I held hands and felt our way carefully. The pace the current was

coming was terrific, and the water surged up to our armpits, but luckily it was not very broad and we got over. The getting the baggage and the mules across was worse still, however, in the end all was accomplished.

Nevertheless we did not get into Guz till about 10 P.M., and there hearing the steamer was to sail next morning I was rewarded for my perseverance in pushing on.

I slept on board the *Shah* that night, and next morning about eleven went on to the steamer, called I think the *Constantine*, and about two we steamed off. In an hour we got to Ashoorada. When I was at Guz I tried to get Cuts-with-Gough to give me a boat to take me there, but he said he could not do so without leave, and when we anchored off it, I concluded it would be equally useless to ask the Captain; so seeing some of the seamen going down the ladder, I said nothing to any one, but walked after them and got into the boat as a matter of course. I suppose they took it for granted I had leave, or did not think it mattered, as they said nothing, and presently we were landed on the spit on which the station of Ashporada stands.

When I got there I was sorry I had taken the trouble to come, as there was absolutely nothing to see. Two or three pretty little houses, a church and some ricketty barracks, with a few trees, all looking as if a few inches more of water would submerge the whole island. I must say the Russians who have to live there are not to be envied.

The importance of the place has been a good deal exaggerated I think, for the Persian Government are so supine, that even if the Russians were not here now nothing would be done to prevent their taking it whenever they liked. No doubt if a proper fort were established on the point, and it was decently armed, it would

cut the Russians off from the fine harbour formed by Astrabad bay: but this is an amount of forethought which the Persians are not to be credited with.

The journey to Enzellee was uneventful; we stopped during the night off Mushudd-i-Sar and arrived at Enzellee about four on the 17th. The Captain was a Russian but spoke a little English, so I got on pretty well. There were some Russian Naval Officers on board going to Bakoo, but none of them could talk anything but Russian. Their appearance was not very taking nor their habits cleanly, for I swear no one washed while I was on board. The meals were very fair, much better than one would get on an English ship of the same nature. There was a good deal of finger work going on at meals, and the dexterity with which knives were used almost amounted to conjuring. It does not accord, either, with our insular prejudices to have smoke puffed in one's face in the middle of meals.

All the time, certainly all the day and a good part of the night, when they were not eating, every one, the Captain included, was playing cards, and the amount of vodkee drunk was astonishing.

One of the passengers was a rather elderly lieutenant of Gunners who had been transferred from the *Teulen* to another ship. Through the Captain I kept up a conversation with him, and in one of the lulls between vodkee and sleep, or cards and vodkee, he informed me that he was passionately devoted to shooting; but when I asked him if he had ever shot any tigers, which are said to abound in the jungle about Guz, he smiled, and said no, that was too dangerous—from which we can estimate the length of his foot.

Landing at Enzellee was quite a dangerous proceeding, there was a tremendous swell on, and I was in

great fright they would take me on to Bakoo, a trick they sometimes, I am told, play passengers. The boats were of the most ricketty nature, and the boatmen the most unskilled body of navigators I have ever seen, so again I thought of my "Kismut."

The mouth of the Enzellee backwater or Moord-ab, is defended by two little forts, more for the name of the thing than any use they can be. The town is situated on a spit of land between the sea and the Moord-ab, to the west of the entrance. The most striking building at Enzellee, is a high octagonal tower of four stories which was built for the Shah. If anything could reconcile one to staying at this place, having such a house to live in would, as it is too high to be much affected by malaria, and it must always get a fine breeze from the sea. After some little difficulty with the Customs authorities, out of which I was very kindly assisted by one of the British Mission Ghoolams who had come down to meet Mr. Ronald Thomson who was expected, I managed to get a boat and we started for Peeree Bazar.

A sail of three hours, during which we lost our way among the reeds, and were nearly having to wait till morning, and we got to the mouth of the Peeree Bazar river, whence we were pulled and poled up in a couple of hours more to the place of that name. The air, all the way from Enzellee, resounded with the noisy trumpeting of musquitos which were of enormous size, and the atmosphere was redolent of malaria; so pronounced indeed was this, that it almost seemed as if one could feel the poison. I have seen some pretty bad fever-stricken places, but never did I see any tract worse than this.

From Peeree Bazar the road is now in good order,

and hiring a pony, I soon got over the five miles between it and Resht; and here, after wandering about the streets for some time, I at last reached the hospitable mansion of the "Consool Inglees," Mr. Churchill, and though it was the middle of the night and this gentleman did not expect me—my telegram not having reached him—he very kindly got up and bustled about for my comfort.

I stayed here three days; and enjoyed myself much in the society of Mr. and Mrs. Churchill. After all my wanderings, it was indeed a treat to receive such kindness from one's own people too. It was also a great pleasure to me to meet one of the heroes of the splendid defence of Kars in '55, and to listen to Mr. Churchill's lucid description of the siege, and examine his beautiful sketches. And not only regarding this feat of arms was my host worth listening to, for he had served Her Majesty in many parts of the world, and had pleasant stories and interesting information to impart about the wild border countries between Persia and Turkey; about various parts of Turkey; about the French in Algeria, and lastly about Zanzibar, where he had been Consul-General. This berth failing health forced him to throw up, and the sad consequence was, that twenty years after he had done his fair share to raise that monument to British pluck, energy, and endurance that is contained in the words "Defence of Kars," he was beginning the world again. Truly, he had missed fortune, but not fame; and it will be well for us if we again find men like Williams, Thomson, Teesdale, Sandwith, and Churchill to see us through our difficulties.

The Russian Consul here was a M. De Nord, and his manners, his tastes, not less than his language were

those of an Englishman. No one could ever have detected his nationality if he had divested himself of the invariable broad-brimmed cap of the Russian official. And he had shown his taste in culling from the garden of Britain's fair daughters one of the brightest flowers. So, between the representatives of the two Asiatic powers and their better halves, known to the people as "Khanum Oroos" and "Khanum Inglees," the time passed very pleasantly.

Resht is, if possible, even more unlike the rest of Persia than is Astrabad. In other parts, Iran generally presents to the view nothing but desolate plains, burnt up hills, and ruined mud cities; and the longing always is for water and vegetation; but here it is all trees and water. Get on to a house, and you see nothing but a plain of dark green foliage hiding everything else; stay below, and everywhere there is water, or swamp, or mud. It is in fact a grand place for a study of botany, or febrile diseases, always supposing the student to have an iron constitution.

It is impossible to describe a place of this kind after so short a stay as I made. Indeed, one would have to go and make a careful plan of it, before one could arrive at any conclusion as to its shape, its length, and its breadth.

The houses are generally scattered about, with gardens and swamps intervening; except in the middle of the town itself, where there are some semblances of streets. The houses are generally built of mud whitewashed, with red tile roofs, which give them a pretty appearance. The principal manufacture of the place is silk, and there were some really beautiful specimens of silk embroidery brought to me for sale, from which I chose a few. These consist of tablecloths, curtains,

saddle-cloths, prayer carpets, &c.; but pretty as they are, they don't come up, in beauty or variety, to the designs in the School of Needlework, which I was afterwards taken to see in London.

The last day of my stay I began to feel a little queer, but I had so long been free from the malarious fever which I had contracted during the Bhotan campaign, that I did not think much of it, and took no notice of the symptoms. On the night of the 21st I said good-bye to my kind hosts, as I was to start very early the next morning; all my things had already gone.

When I woke about 2 A.M. on the 22nd, I felt more queer, and instinctively looked at my finger nails, after our invariable custom in Bhotan. They looked blue, and I must say I felt blue and shivery. However, still I hoped the fever would go, so I mounted my horse and rode the first stage to Sungur, about fifteen miles.

The road is quite good, being raised, drained, and bridged. It goes through a very close country, of which little can consequently be seen.

At Sungur there is a very nice serai, with some capital rooms, in a gateway under which the road goes. The walls of this caravanserai are built of different coloured bricks arranged in pretty patterns. Some supplies are procurable here, and, it is needless to add, also abundance of water, fuel, and forage.

I stopped here for breakfast, and the man brought me some delicious fresh bread, only somehow, the only thing I could eat was grapes. I felt cold and wretched, so I soon went on.

The road on to the next stage, Roostumabad, is good throughout, though there are many little ascents and descents, and after rain it would doubtless be heavy. It keeps close to the left bank of the Soofeid Rood,

—which is a fine river—and crosses some of its affluents by ricketty bridges or by fords. I passed numbers of the country people, who looked generally unhealthy, though the womenkind had very pretty features, and the dark eye of the East. I noticed that the "banghy," or mode of carrying loads slung to each end of a pole, which I had thought was peculiar to India, was here also common. At nine miles we passed a place called Imamzada Hasleem, where there is good ground for a camp in a pretty clearing. Beyond this the valley became more and more open, the hills receding and the forest ceasing, so that we could see the country. It is a beautiful tract of good soil, the hills coming down in terraces. At fifteen miles I reached Roostumabad, where there is a nice caravanserai, which I rode up to, in the hope that I might find my things here, and so be enabled to halt.

The fact was, the ague and cold from which I suffered in the first stage, had now turned to unmistakable fever, and I had ridden the whole of this stage with it on me. Unluckily my men had gone on, and as I had nothing with me, not even a little quinine, I got a drink of water and another horse, and then continued my journey.

For three miles the valley continues pretty open, but then the hills close in, and the road, which is quite good, is cut out of the sides of the hills, which soon become quite precipitous down to the river. Winding round them we came in ten miles to the village of Roodbar, a long large village which stretches along the left bank of the river for a mile and more, and is embosomed in a forest of olive trees. Threading my weary way through this place, I went on for two and a half miles to a bridge over the Kizl Ozan. This is a more

imposing than useful structure, for a good part of it was carried away soon after it was built, and a temporary bridge had been erected along one side of it, till such time as the Persians chose to repair the regular bridge. I arrived here just after dark, and met a most terrific and very cold wind blowing down the pass, which, considering the fever was now raging on me, did not add much to my comfort. However, everything has an end, and one and a half miles brought this wretched ride to an end, when we arrived at the Chuppur Khana at Munjeel. Here I found my things had arrived, that my two Persian servants were down with fever, that my incomparable boy Pascal also had it, but that he had nevertheless made my bed and got dinner ready. Dinner! ugh, the very name makes one almost sick; no, no, give me another flannel; bring my fur coat, my blankets, my waterproof sheets, pile them all on me; give me twenty grains of quinine and leave me alone!

Two wretched days did I stay at this horrid place. Next day, the 23rd, I had another very sharp go, which did not go off till the morning of the 24th, and by that time I felt much too poor a creature to have another day in the sun; so we stayed till night and then rode to a miserable hovel called, I think, Muzrah. I could not make out much about the road for it was extremely dark, and I was very weak and miserable. But this does not matter, as the road henceforward to Tehran is perfectly well known. We went over a pass called the Kotul-y-Khurzan which was steep, but not very bad.

At Muzrah I stayed all day and then went on next night to Kusveen, by a perfectly good road. Here I put up in the Chuppur Khana, and scandalized my

friend at the Telegraph Office very much by so doing. I had got pretty well by this time, and my boy also picked up, but my Persians declined to move a step further, so I had to leave them.

On the 27th and 28th we rode through the night, and reached Tehran early in the morning of the 29th. Here after a great deal of difficulty I found a house which had been told off for me, so, as I was pretty tired, I spread my rugs on the bare ground and was soon asleep.

"Hullo, when the deuce did you turn up?" were the first words I heard on waking after three or four hours' snooze, and looking up I saw a cheery-looking individual, with a long red moustache, dressed in the most correct European style. Reader, let me introduce Capt. the Hon. George Napier.

I had not known much of this gentleman before, but considering I had been following in his steps for the last four months, and had been hearing daily what Napier Sahib said and what he did, I felt like meeting an old friend, though I daresay I looked as if the old friend had "woke me too early."

He then told me I had not been expected so soon, but that Mr. Taylor Thomson was very kindly going to send over furniture for my abode, and he begged that I would consider myself his guest during my stay. In consequence of which I did consider myself his guest, and I hope H.E.'s cook appreciated my efforts to do justice to his master's hospitality.

The Mission was at this time staying at Goolahek, a village about six or seven miles north of Tehran, situated just where the hills begin to rise from the dreary plain below. This was rather a nuisance for me, as I only wanted to make a short stay in order to see the city of Tehran, and I should have to ride seven

miles there and seven miles back every day, thus wasting a great deal of time. However, as it would not have done to offer such a slight to the hospitality proffered me, I made the best of it.

It would be no use trying to describe Tehran, as every one who has ever been in Persia has already done that, and I suppose it would be impossible to say anything new about it. I stayed here ten days and was really glad of the rest, and thoroughly enjoyed the converse with my own genus. Every one was very kind, especially those princes of good fellows the "Telegraphchees." On the whole I had no reason to complain of my treatment by the Persians in my travels. I hardly ever met with incivility, generally with much politeness from high and low, and sometimes with kindness that could not have been surpassed. It is not therefore from any spirit of ingratitude to the Persians that I thus record my pleasure. Persians are very good fellows, as I have said, and they are, like ourselves, of the order man, "Adam," but there are many subdivisions of this order. The simplest, and as I have never seen it specified before, perhaps the newest division, I take to be one which a long service in the East—during which I have ranged from Pekin and Bhotan to Abyssinia and Iran—convinces me is a right one. That is, all human beings, inclusive of our relations the monkeys, are distinguished from all other animals by their propensity for sitting, and all are so formed that they have something to sit upon. The simplest distinction then appears to me to be, 1st, those who have got somewhere to put that something, and who may be called "Koorsee nisheens." 2nd, Those who have nowhere to put that something, and may therefore be termed "Khood nisheens." No doubt this is not a scientific division of

the human race, and it is not therefore one I wish to press on the Anthropological Society, but it seems to me practical and simple, and as such I recommended it to the unscientific.

The subdivisions of the first are English and American, French, German, Austrian, Italian, in a descending scale, till we come to the Russian, who it is interesting to note is just emerging from the second state, which contains Turks, Persians, Indians, &c., &c.

If these primary divisions are borne in mind we have a clue at once to the habits, character, and feelings of the people under review, for in all these are "Koorsee nisheens" opposed to "Khood nisheens," in a greater or less degree, accordingly as the sub-tribe of one approaches the other; that is, an American and Hindoo are as different as an ape is from a frog, but there is no such great difference discernible, in the character of the Russian and the Turk.

Slight consideration will make this apparent. First with regard to habits. Cleanliness is every day, as we advance in civilization, becoming more and more regarded as an absolute necessity among those who habitually sit on chairs; while those who squat still scarcely ever change their clothes, and look upon washing not only as unnecessary but as positively deleterious.

Again, class B habitually regard woman as an inferior being, a mere animal, born to pander to their own animal passions; while class A, the higher we go in the scale look on her more and more as a being to be loved, honoured, cherished, and when a very high degree of perfection is reached, such as that attained by Mr. Mill —obeyed.

Then as to character: surely it cannot be gainsaid that the one are, as a rule, lovers of truth, any more than it can be denied the others are tellers of lies. Witness the accounts of the Franco-German war as compared with those of the Russo-Turkish war. And surely this great difference must influence the character to an indefinite degree, and through the character, all the actions.

Next let us take religion: whatever the practice may be (and that, I am sorry to confess, often tends too much to the blood and iron régime), the theory of the Christian religion inculcates peace, goodwill towards all men, charity—and one may expect to meet all these qualities in a greater or less degree among Christian nations. But if we would not be deceived we must always expect to find the contrary amongst the others.

However, this is a mere digression. Life at Tehran for a European, can only be taken in the literal and primary sense of that word, and not quite that. Webster, I think, defines life as a state in which an animal is capable of performing its functions. Well, I suppose a European in Tehran can eat, and sleep, and walk, but there are some functions he never gets a chance of exercising, and others, such as using his brain, gets so little practice, that I should say if a good many people's heads in Persia were cut open, the brain would be found to have become fossilized. As to life, as one sees it in happier regions, there is no notion of that.

The society is very limited, and unfortunately what there is, is almost entirely composed of the various embassies and their followers; and the important diplomatic functions which they perform take up so much of their time, that little is left for an outsider; and they

are so veiled in mystery, that to let him into any of the secrets of this diplomatic Pedlington would be a course too frightful to contemplate. Talking as a complete outsider, one would not have thought that there was much of great moment to do at Tehran, but there must be, as I never saw any cabinet minister at home, or member of council in India, so weighed down by the cares of office as these gentlemen seem to be.

As long as one has to remain at Tehran, and after you have exhausted the very scanty list of lions in these dreary abodes of the Kujjurs, there is literally nothing to do but eat and sleep. It is generally just too hot to make walking a pleasure, and the whole country is so stony that there is little amusement to be got out of riding. You can talk, of course, but always with the disadvantage of being cut off from, at least, half of the subjects which makes social conversation so delightful in Europe.

However, I must not go on in this way, or it will be thought that I did not enjoy my stay; whereas the fact is, I did do so very much. I am not finding fault with the Europeans, but only commiserating them; and trying to show how it is the duty of the respective Governments who employ Europeans in these parts to give them very large pay to gild their joyless existence.

The village of Goolahek is one of many similar little villages situated at the foot of the main range to the north of Tehran, which have been given to the various missions as summer residences by the Shah. I believe the British mission first succeeded in getting this grant, and, of course, afterwards all the other missions had to be similarly treated; because it is one of the great points in diplomacy in these parts, never to do with less

than your confrères—get as much more as you can, but never do with less, otherwise your Government will be thought "small beer" of by the Persians.

I believe the whole village of Goolahek belongs to the mission, and in it have been built a Residency for the ambassador, with one or two smaller houses which are occupied by the lesser lights. All these are enclosed in a pretty garden which is nicely laid out, and strictly guarded from the entrance of the unhallowed, by a party of the King of King's ludicrous warriors.

Outside this a very nice house has been built in a separate garden for the director of the telegraph, and there are besides some other native houses occupied by attachés and others.

The diplomatic world is represented by ambassadors from Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Turkey, and, I believe, Italy; but I had not much opportunity of seeing any of the other nationalities.

Generally my day was spent as follows:—In the morning after the cup of tea which I am much too well brought up an Indian officer ever to neglect, we went out for a ride, I generally being mounted from Captain Napier's stud, in which he had some fine Arabs and two or three good Toorkmuns. Then came a tub and breakfast at the mission, followed by a ride into the city, where making Mr. Preece's hospitable house my head-quarters, I made trips to the bazaars, where I emptied my pockets and increased my experience at the same time.

There are many things well worthy of the attention of the curio-hunter to be had in Tehran. In the first place, there is, or was, a good deal of China that would have driven many an otherwise sane friend of mine into hysterics. The brass work also is very curious. It consists of a

sort of open work in which figures of men and animals, trees and flowers, are cut out of the metal, and this is generally shaped into vases of different shapes. I also bought some very beautiful water goblets, made of clouded steel inlaid with gold.

The enamel work is very pretty, and is made into "Kalioon" bottles, coffee-cup holders, vases, and trays. I tried very hard to get some specimens of jewellery, but whether there was any prejudice on their parts in selling such things, or the women of Persia do not go in for these frivolities, I don't know. Except some silver bracelets and necklaces, the only pretty things I got was some little gold round filagree-work clasps, such as the women fasten their "bourkas" with. Of these I got six or seven, and had them made into a pretty bracelet when I reached London.

There was also a great variety of silk embroidery from Resht, some velvet curtains and prayer carpets from Kashan, and every style of carpet made in Persia; but it was not easy to get fairly clean specimens of these. I do not know which description of carpet I like best. Some of those from Khorassan are very pretty, but many are very gaudy. The Toorkmun carpets are neat, with a beautiful thick pile; but perhaps the best are the Koordistan pile carpets, of which I secured two, which were as soft as velvet, and of beautiful and exquisite patterns.

But if any of my readers want to see a great deal more of Persian manufactures than I can tell him of, let him go to the South Kensington Museum, where there is a collection of Persian art, made and lucidly described by my friend Major Murdoch Smith, the like of which does not exist elsewhere.

Though there is very little to see in Tehran, it is, I

think, on the whole the finest town in Persia. The Shah's palace is worth looking at, and so are one or two other buildings; but the bazaars, which are much the best I saw in Persia, well repay a visit, though one meets with far more incivility here than even in that hotbed of fanaticism, Mushudd. The bazaars are roofed in, and are very extensive.

The city is situated low down on the plain which slopes from the mountains, and its surroundings are nothing but a barren stony waste. A feeble attempt has been made to erect round it an "enceinte" on a European plan, but, like everything Persian, it is but a half-hearted attempt, and the parts that are finished fall to ruin before the rest is begun. The gate on the north is a pretty piece of architecture, being covered with well-arranged tiles of the Kashee work; but it is much more suitable for the entrance to Cremorne than to a fortified town.

At Tehran I did not go in for calling on any of the swells, as my time was fully, and much more pleasantly, occupied in the society of my own grade. But I thought it only right to pay my respects to the Suddur Azim, or prime minister; so I drove down with one of the officials of the Embassy, who tried in broken English to impress me with the importance of the visit I was about to make, and the honour that was about to be done me. I can't say the first flurried me much; and, as for the second, when one gentleman calls on another simply as such, I take it the honour is as much on one side as the other. When we arrived, we were kept kicking our heels like importunate creditors outside his Excellency's door for nearly half an hour. I did not like this, and several times made a move to go, but was stayed by the mute look of agony and horror

portrayed on my mentor's countenance. At last we got in, and, as may be imagined, I was not in a very sweet temper. The Suddur Azim received me very cavalierly; however, we shook hands, and I sat down on a ricketty-looking form, which forthwith gave way, and brought me to the ground. On this his Excellency burst into a rude guffaw, which quite nettled me; so, getting up with as much dignity as I could, I said, "It is of no consequence, your Excellency; the form is typical of Iran." My mentor on this turned green. H. E. did not like it, but he evidently appreciated it, as afterwards he was civil enough; and so, after a talk, I took my leave, and finished my last call in Persia.

Having seen all there was to be seen, I meant to leave after a stay of about six days, but another attack of fever kept me to my bed for a couple of days, and proved that my meanderings through the dank forests of Astrabad had not been without results, and this fever which I here contracted stuck to me all through the winter.

However, I got away at last, I think it was on the 10th of October, and was lucky in having secured Captain Napier as my companion in the ride to Tabreez. We started about three in the afternoon, and rode quietly the first stage, where we stayed the night.

This was my first experience of the famed "chuppur" riding of Persia, and I looked forward to it with as much pleasure as I look back on the thought that it is over with delight. I had heard a great deal of it, for every one in Persia rides "chuppur," and every one says they like it. The stories I heard were enough to put me on the "qui vive." "You know, it's awfully jolly," says A.; "you get a horse for yourself, stick a pair of

'khorzeens' on him with your things, then you have another for the 'chuppurchi,' and you bowl along your hundred miles a day as jolly as possible." "Yes," chimes in B., "then the climate is splendid, and you arrive, you get a bit of bread from the village, and get the 'chuppurchi' to cook you a fowl, then you turn in for a couple of hours, and then you're off again as lively as a lark."

Then they go on and tell you stories, which I daresay are perfectly true, how Champain went from Ispahan to Tehran something slower than an English telegraphic message; how Pearson did it ever so much quicker than a Persian telegram; how St. John is said to have beaten every one, till little Dr. Waters came and outstripped all. The fact is, one of the effects of Persian air seems to be to immediately fill every one with a fierce desire not only to chuppur, but to chuppur at a greater pace than any one has ever chuppured before.

But I had done some pretty hard and long rides in my day. I had seen, and heard, a good deal of long riding in the burning sun of Indian hot weather, and, though I will not say I disbelieved their stories, I was "canny," and certainly doubted the jolliness of it.

Still, as I called to memory some of my rides in the winter in India, especially a very pleasant one I once made with Colonel Earle along the Trans-Indus frontier, and remembered the delightfully willing little nags we had, and the perfect arrangements made by the officers of "the Force"* for our comfort, I was prepared to believe that with good arrangements we might have a very pleasant time of it.

"With good arrangements remember, Napier, I believe in the pleasure of bowling along fifty or sixty

* The Punjab Frontier Force.

miles a day on a good little nag; but none of your fowls cooked by chuppurchis, if you please, so I am going to take my 'boy' and a due amount of bedding and cooking things."

Thus it was arranged. I had one horse for myself, another for my boy, two for baggage, and one for my "chuppurchi," and Napier having arranged for his own wants, thus we got off.

As there was no use in going quick the first stage, we walked that, and got in just after dark, and we got on pretty fairly to Kusveen; but after that, after we were cut off from all help, then we came on to a set of animals which I believe cannot be equalled in the whole world.

I will not trouble my readers with a detail of all the miseries we suffered from these brutes—nay, these sticks. Most of them looked as old as Methuselah, and all felt as if they had been going ever since their birth; none showed any signs of ever having been fed, all had sores on every part of their body, and none had any power of feeling.

So we went on, stage by stage, some being far too long for even a fresh horse. At the beginning of a stage there was always a certain amount of hope in our breasts. The animal did not look as if he could put one leg before another; but the chuppurchi always said he was a real good one, and had carried Pearson Sahib in two hours, or had borne the "Sword of the Empire," or some other high official, like the wind; once we were off, we should see. And we did see: we saw that he was lame in all four legs, had a mouth one side of which had as much feeling as a barn-door, and the other was bleeding; we saw that no whip and no spur that ever was invented could make him go. So after a few miles the

hope changed to despair, which got blacker and blacker as each passer-by we asked the distance said it was two farsakhs farther than the last liar had declared. Then, towards the end, we got better, hope began to live again; surely in this animal we had had the worst that all Persia could produce, and the next would be, must be, better. But the next was no better; it was the father of the last, and the next again the grandfather of that. Twice I got good brutes that went well, and my hope fed on these all through; if I had got a good one once, it was clearly not impossible I might again.

I was going to say we took it easily, but I will change the expression into—we did not go fast, but took eight days to do the 400 miles. It was a physical impossibility, even if it would not have been frightful cruelty, to attempt to go faster. We used to start always at an unearthly hour in the morning, and, except a halt for breakfast, we went all day, and we very seldom got in before dark. Therefore, my scepticism about "poulet à la chuppurkhana" stood us in good stead; at all events, we got pretty decent food and had tolerably sound sleep.

I will not describe the road; it has been fully described before. Suffice it to say, it was excellent throughout, and is perfectly practicable for artillery, the best proof of which is that we met a train of the great lumbering four-wheeled waggons which Russians delight in, going to Tehran. The worst bit is over the Kalifan Koh, a pretty steep and high pass, but nothing to stop guns.

Our second stage was to Suffee Khojah, and our third to Kusveen, a short one. Here we were most hospitably received by M. ——, whose fair young

wife did all she could for our comfort. Another brought us to Sooltania, a ruined village situated in a magnificent plain, well suited for the purpose to which it is said sometimes to be put—viz., an exercise ground for the Shah's troops. Here there is a very imposing-looking tomb with a dome over 100 feet high, once covered with enamelled tiles, but now, alas! yet of course, in ruins also. On the way thither, my steed, one of the two animals who live in my memory as "among the faithless, faithful only he," while galloping with me along the slippery side of a slope, came down on to my right foot, and gave my ancle such a nasty twist that I made sure it was broken, and the consequence was that to all the other disagreeables of the ride I had now only one foot to kick on steeds which required twenty to make them go at all.

Next we came to Zunjan, said to contain "the most mutinous and troublesome inhabitants in Persia," a fact which perhaps accounts for its name being connected with fair women, "hard to please." Here we breakfasted, and, riding on through its fine bazaar, came out into a valley the waters of which drain to the Kizl Ozan, the largest river in Persia. Going down this valley to near its end, we went over some low ridges, and halted for the night at Jumalabad.

Here there is a telegraph station, but with the Englishman's usual reserve in intruding on strangers, we did not trouble the officers in charge, but put up at a once very fine, but now ruined caravanserai. The courtyard was in a most filthy state, and all the lower rooms likewise, so we tried the roof; but here also we found unpleasant mementos of man's presence, so we were forced to choose a windy, cold passage which led

over the arch of the gate. Our next-door neighbours were a batch of Koordish prisoners, who were supposed to have committed some crime against the majesty of Persian law, and were being taken to Zunjan for punishment or as hostages. They seemed very poor, and though dirty and wretched were very civil to us. Perhaps they thought that we might turn the hearts of stone of those who were to judge them.

Though there were all sorts of stories here of the Koords being "out," we pushed on during the night, and negotiated the Kafilan Koh successfully by the time the dawn appeared. It is quite an easy pass, and part of it has been paved, a piece of engineering which the slippery nature of the stones makes practically useless after rains or in winter. Descending from this we crossed the Kizl Ozan and reached Meeana. The dreadful stories we had heard of the Meeana bug made us disinclined to stay here, even if it had been convenient to do so; therefore, while Pascal was preparing a grill, Napier and I carefully swept a part of the room clean, and taking up our position as if on watch for an enterprising and relentless foe, we nervously waited for our breakfast. The arrangement was that each was to guard a half of the circumference of the platform, and on the approach of any animal, known or unknown, biped or quadruped, winged or otherwise, we were at once to give the alarm and retreat—anywhere. Luckily, however, our sojourn passed over without any meeting with the famous bug, but the following description of the animal, extracted from Ouseley, will show we had grounds for our fears:—

"Of the 'milleh' or Mianeh bug many *extraordinary* anecdotes are related *highly alarming* to strangers, for *such only* are they said to annoy. They fall from the

ceilings of houses. It is said of twelve muleteers bitten *only six recovered*," &c., &c.

Escaping the bug, we rode over a very dreary waste, but with a fine view of the Sahund mountain to the westward of the Savalan Dagh to the north of Toorkmunchai, where in 1828 Paskievitz extorted the treaty of this name from Abbass Mirza, which bound the Persian Government to pay the enormous sum of two millions sterling. Going on from this we stayed the night at Hadjee Agha, a post-house. Next morning we rode to Syudabad, passing a small salt lake called Karagool on the way. Here we breakfasted, and met two gentlemen who were en route to Tehran. They belonged to the firm of Ziegler & Co., and were armed in the most curiously complete manner I have ever seen. I never heard of them afterwards, but I am satisfied they must have reached Tehran without being attacked, as the mere sight of their armament must have scared any number of Koords.

Going on from this we crossed a ridge, and then descended the whole way to Tabreez. The last four miles of the road seemed interminable. It appeared all to be between garden walls, and it was night before we got to the English Mission-house. As there was no representative of our long-suffering nation present, the French Consul-General, M. Dejoux, in the kindest manner possible, had sent over and got some rooms ready for us, and placed seats at his table at our disposal during our stay. Our dearest friends could not have been more kind than were M. and Madame Dejoux.

As my nose was now pointing homeward, I had no wish to stay long here, and there was nothing in the place to repay us for delay, so on the 21st, after breakfast, I started. I hoped to have made

Marand that day, but though I arrived at Sofeean about 3 P.M., my things did not turn up till long after dark, about 10 P.M. It was then too late to go on, and I determined to wait till the moon rose, when I rode on and reached Marand, a fine village, with great abundance of water, in a pleasant situation.

On the arrival of my things, I found out why it was they had not come up the day before. The fact was the chuppurchi had lagged behind, and he must have deliberately tried to burst my boxes open, for there were a number of marks on the lid, at the bottom, and at the sides, which showed he had done his best. The boxes, luckily, were of strong block-tin, and as I suppose he had no instrument more suitable than an iron picketing peg, he failed, and had then brought on my boxes. I reported the circumstance to M. Dejoux, and though he took the greatest trouble about it, I heard the man, though imprisoned, had been let out very soon.

Going on at once from Marand, I breakfasted at the next post-house, the name of which I have forgotten, and then rode on to Soolfa. As I had now got to the end of the Shah's dominions, before leaving them I may mention an incident which shows how high the British name stands in these parts. I was galloping past the caravanserai on the Persian side of the Aras, in a state of the highest elation in being absolutely at last about to be freed from "chuppur" horses, when a man ran out shouting towards me. I stopped, and when he came up he said, insolently—"Come back, and give up your horse at the chuppurkhana;" but as by that manœuvre I should have had to walk half a mile to the river, I proposed an amendment, which was—"You come on to the ferry and fetch it," and so I went on. He ran

after me, and caught the bridle, so I cut him over the hand, and he let go, called me a name, and said he would report me to the "oroos" opposite. "Oh, will you?" said I; "then you had better have something to report about," and I galloped after him, but he caught my bridle, and as my switch was not of much use, and I could not reach him with my hand, I jumped off, knocked him down flat, jumped on my horse, left him howling, and went to the ferry and crossed.

It must have been about five I arrived, and on landing I was met by an old man with the broad official cap of Russia, and in appearance like a pensioned half-caste band boy in India, who asked me for my passport.

This I gave him, as well as my "padorogna," or order for horses, and then he very kindly offered me a room in his house, and said I could have the "troika" in the morning.

Accordingly, on the morning of the 23rd, the "troika" came. It certainly was an awful contrivance to look at, a sort of boat on wheels, without the ghost of a spring. However, it was not so bad as it looked, as they made a seat of ropes, which, covered with blankets, was a fair make-shift. The horses all through were most excellent, three being harnessed at each stage, and it was a great comfort to get all one's things with one.

We first came to Nukohhvan, the first Russian cantonment. Here, after great difficulty, I found a place they called the "Cloob," where I got something to eat. An English officer being, I fancy, a somewhat rare article in these parts, I enjoyed the advantage of having a levee of a good number of the Russian officers in the place. As the news spread, they came dropping in one by one, always in uniform, and generally with their

swords on. I essayed to open a conversation, but they neither "meegoled" Persian, or "parleyed" French, and as these were the only two languages I knew anything of, we failed in opening communications. Eventually a native, an Armenian, who spoke Persian and Russian, was produced, and I got him to interpret a few civil phrases for me, and soon after I got off again.

Driving on through a bleak barren country intersected with stony ravines and crossed by spurs from the mountains on the right, we at last emerged on to a fine plain, covered with villages and cultivation, with the glorious peak of Ararat rising straight up on the left. It was a most magnificent sight, the equal of which I have never seen. Far-stretching snowy ranges, and glorious snow-clad peaks I have seen innumerable, but this was quite different. There was always on other occasions a foreground of mountains rising up one behind the other, and taking off a great deal of the grandeur of the line of everlasting snow; but here, in the foreground was a beautiful smiling plain, interspersed with foliage, and sprinkled with pretty villages, from which the noble mass of snow rose up at once majestically and grandly, challenging the beholder to find a fault in the inimitably grand picture disclosed to his view. This was one of those moments, which I have so often felt, when I would have given my right hand to have been able to transfer the scene to my sketch-book. It is a real misfortune to have artistic taste and a strong feeling for the beautiful in nature without being able to carry away with one the scenes that touch one. Words even fail me; yet the beautiful, majestic peak is before me now, photographed in all its grand details, its splendid *ensemble*.

Passing through the pretty villages of Sudduruck, Devaloo, and many others, we came to Ereevan just as it was getting dark. Then I had a hunt for an hour before I could find a place to lay my head. No one could understand anything I said, and the word "hotel," which I thought was known all over the civilized world, repeated dozens of times, failed to elicit any recognition of my meaning from the people we passed. At last I was relieved from my dilemma by my boy, who somehow or other had found out that "gustaneetsa" meant hotel, and then they drove me up to a building from which sounds of revelry were heard.

At first, even here, no one could be found to whom I could make myself intelligible, till at last a person appeared, who, understanding French in a fashion, explained to the people what I wanted. Then, by dint of further colloquy, I got them to give me a room and something to eat. But let me draw a veil over these. Russian ways are not English ways, thank God!

I only stayed next day till about noon to drive about and have a look at the place, and then went on. The road which had hitherto been execrable was now a regular made road, and I soon forgot the awful joltings I had experienced. Driving past the dreary looking lake of Gokcha, we ascended the Deleejan Pass easily, and then descended by a zigzag well-engineered road to that place. It is situated along the banks of a stream, and reminded me, in the way the houses were strewn about the hill sides, of an Indian hill station.

From this we drove down a pretty and well-wooded mountain valley to Dagkesaman, where the Bakoo road joins, and then over undulating country on the south of the fine valley of the Koor to Tiflis, getting there just after dark.

I stayed here some five or six days, enjoying my first introduction to civilization—albeit Russian—hugely; but as I have every intention of again visiting this magnificent country, I will not trouble the reader with any description thereof, or of the delightful drive over the Caucasus to Hadee Kufkas.

The tail end of a long journey, after one is heartily sick of new scenes, is not the mood in which to visit the Caucasus, and as I know I should not do it justice, I will refrain from doing it injustice. The one thought that was present in my mind was *home*. Alas, not such a home as I had often dreamed of going to, where each pleasure would have been enhanced and reflected in the bright eyes of her who has gone from me, but still a home where I should see our child, and begin with her a new life.

From Hadee Kufkas I took rail to Rostov. The dread Russian winter had already begun, and the fearful steppes were already covered with snow. Indeed, I thought to myself as I gazed out of the windows of the carriage on the desolate scene, if this is Russia, I can understand the longing of that people to get southward, to warmer and sunnier climes.

Proceeding *viâ* Rostov, Kharkov, and Cracow, I came to bright, gay Vienna. But its joys had no charm for me, and I pressed on, and on the 15th November, arrived in dear old England.

Reader, I have done; I have fulfilled the desire of mine enemies, and written a book. So now, defying them to do their worst, I turn to those who are my friends, as well as to those who were in blissful ignorance of my existence, and to them I say, I have tried as well as I can to describe what I saw in an eight months' trip. If I have failed to impart to you any amusement or any

instruction, then join with me in the fervent hope, that the *cacoethes scribendi*, which has inflicted this volume on you, may

Requiescat in pace.

APPENDIX I.

TRAVELLING IN PERSIA.

It may not, perhaps, be unadvisable if I now say a word for the benefit of those of my readers who may wish hereafter to travel in Persia. There are only two ways of travelling in Persia; one is to ride "chuppur" right through the country, and try to beat every one who has ever gone before you. By this means you will cover a great deal of ground, take in very little of the country, see nothing of the people, and arrive at your destination in a condition something between a skinned eel and a boiled lobster. In order to do this, you have only got to arrive at Resht or Bushuhr, and taking an equipment of the Napierian order, get on to your "chuppur" horse, and whack him and spur him till your arms ache and your spurs are a mass of blood. Repeat this as many times as you can in the twenty-four hours, and every day for about a fortnight, and you will be about as glad to see the sea at the other end as Zenophon's warriors were. If one is pressed for time, and yet does not wish to go by the usual weary round by Aden, Suez and Brindisi, I would strongly recommend this trip, as I think it is far better to see even this little of the country than none at all. Some men have, of course, the faculty of observation strong within them, and such will, no doubt, profit by their ride; and as for others, time will draw a veil over the disagreeables of the trip, nature will, no doubt, soon replace any expended cuticle and restore the tone of an outraged digestion, and they will be able to record "it is awfully jolly." The other is, to march with either hired or purchased cattle. Horses for riding had better be purchased; mules can be hired almost anywhere, and besides, if they are paid well, the muleteers are grand fellows, and will go anywhere. First, as to outfit, I may as well say what I had, as I made out my list before starting, from a large experience of similar work, and I found it suited exactly, being neither too much nor too little. The best sort of hat is undoubtedly a Terai hat, as it wants no care to keep in shape, and affords excellent shade for the face. Round this I tied, first, a small piece of mosquito net, big enough to cover the face and hands, and enable one to get an hour or two's snooze after the march was over; second, a silk turban loosely stuffed with

cotton wool, which on occasion I used as a comforter. The turban rolled up and stuffed inside the hat, makes the latter an excellent pillow. Next, I think, a pair of clouded glass spectacles—made in two pieces, to cover the side of the eyes as well as the front—are quite indispensable if the journey is to be made in the hot weather, as the glare, in crossing the salt or sandy or barren wastes, is sometimes very trying.

You may suit yourself as to coat, provided it is loose and has lots of pockets. I always used a light loose coat, made like a "Derby wrapper," with six pockets. Some people prefer breeches, but though very nice when actually riding, they are not so generally useful as a pair of well-made riding trousers. I had two pairs, and they just lasted me through.

Of flannel shirts four will be enough, and a couple of white ones for swell occasions, and I had six pairs of strong linen drawers, which did for bathing as well as ordinary wear. One has little need for much walking, unless one is going in for shooting, in which case, of course, it will be advisable to take some pairs of thick woollen socks.

I had two pairs of strong brown leather walking boots, one pair of black boots with box heels, and a pair of soft brown leather gaiters, and a cherished pair of hunting spurs which have clung to me for twenty long years, and been stuck into many a gallant and many a white-livered steed.

Though some anonymous friend has been good enough to pitch into me for using my uniform on one occasion, let me recommend any one to take an undress suit with them. You must go and pay your respects to the various governors and officials, as it is not only right, but expedient, that you should be civil to them, else, as in other parts of the world, they will not be civil to you; and remember that if a swell takes it into his head to be rude, it is not only his boorishness you have to meet, but that of all his hangers' on. I would also recommend your taking a suit of decent clothes, with a black coat, for use when you are halting at the larger places. It is just as necessary to be able to look respectable on occasions in Persia as anywhere else.

This completes the list of clothes. Besides, I had a small Indian sleeping tent, weighing about 70lbs.; but the people in Persia are everywhere so civil, that you will very seldom require to pitch it. I think, therefore, if I went again, I would only take a sort of awning, made like those used on boats, which gives just enough shade to cover you when sitting up writing, or lying down to read.

In the way of bedding, the best thing to have under you is a sack of strong Russia duck, stuffed with chopped straw, which is procurable in every village in Persia. It forms a most comfortable bed, and when you start you can empty the contents and pack it up with your other bedding. Of this I had three good blankets, and a fur coat. In the summer it is seldom cold enough to require all these, but in the spring and autumn the nights are sharp, especially if you have to sleep in the open. I had, in addition, a Scotch cap, and a pair of chamois leather sleeping socks. I

bought in the Caucasus a "bashlek" or hood, which I always mean to take with me in future. For pillows I used two bags stuffed with flannel shirts, towels, &c., which, on the march, were slung over my spare horse in a Khorzeen. All the rest of my bedding, except the blankets, was rolled up in a strong waterproof sheet, 8ft. by 4ft., with double straps.

In saddlery, I had two good hunting saddles with any amount of dittos, and each, with a couple of saddlebags and two broad English girths, made short for the small horses one gets. I had two good English headstalls, and I brought out English reins and bits; but I soon discarded these last for the country ones, which are, in my opinion, much more convenient. To each headstall I had one of the beautiful strong silk ropes with a bit of Toorkmun chain, and an iron picketing peg. The blankets I strapped on in a roll before and behind (by the way, take lots of straps, as a Persian is quite unable to resist their annexation). In one of the saddlebags I carried my own breakfast, in the other a feed for my horse. Inside one blanket I carried a towel, comb, tooth-brush, and a bit of soap; inside the other, a pair of loose drawers and a pair of slippers; and attached to my near saddlebag was a small sabretache containing maps, a few sheets of paper, and mapping materials.

For arms I carried a sword and a pistol, and I had, besides, a couple of Snider carbines and a breech-loading gun, which my servants carried. Of instruments, I had with me a couple of prismatic compasses and two aneroid barometers, and I would recommend, also, a couple of hypsometers and pocket sextants. I had a pair of binoculars which I never used, and a beautiful telescope, which probably saved my skin from the prick of a Toorkmun lance once, if not twice.

I took with me a Bombay Portuguese servant, who cooked, talked English, and did everything. To say he was of the greatest use to me is to give but a faint idea of his qualities; suffice it to say, he was simply worth his weight in gold. I had first three, then two, then one Persian servant, and found invariably, whether in twos, or threes, or single, they were utterly useless. Still it is a good thing to have one or two to look after your horses and run messages.

I think that is all, excepting some cooking pots, some enamelled iron plates, knives and forks, and a few books. All this made two mule loads; but as some of the marches were very long, and without water, and it is absolutely necessary to mount all your servants, and certainly to let one of your muleteers have a ride occasionally, I never regretted having gone in for, and kept up all through my journey, six mules. I had no stores but tea and sugar and tobacco, and I never found the want of them. A good cook is what is wanted, and he is not heavier to carry than a bad one. Liquor of any kind I never do care for much, and so I did without any with comfort.

APPENDIX II.

From Beeabunnuck to Semnan there are two roads, viz., from Khoor—

1. Faruckhi, 3 farsangs, 40 houses, water few supplies, level over Kuveer.
2. Jandak, 3 farsangs, water, village, few supplies, road level over earth.
3. Pesh-i-Giaza, 9 farsangs, level 1 farsang, 2 farsangs between hills, then over sand, water and supplies.
4. Hoosenoo, 30 farsangs Kuveer, water and supplies.

From this the road goes to Semnan thus: Chah Shoran 8 farsangs, Semnan 9 farsangs, water. To Damghan the road goes from Hoosenoo to Reshm 2 farsangs, Gola-Ki 3 farsangs; road is very bad over hills called Koo-Tunga, water and villages. Forot 10 farsangs. The road is level over earth, village. Thence Damghan is 5 farsangs through villages and cultivation. This road is a good deal used in winter by caravans of camels.

Khoor to Biarjoomund:—

1. Sar-Chah, 2 farsangs, water, few supplies. The road is level.
2. Arasoon, 6 farsangs, water, hamlet. Road level.
3. In Kuveer, 10 farsangs, no water.
4. In Kuveer, 10 farsangs, no water.
5. Túrút, 10 farsangs, all Keveer, water, small village.
6. Sar-Chah, 7 farsangs, road level, water.
7. Biarjoomund, 7 farsangs, road level, water half way between Túrút and Biarjoomund: there is a range to go over between, but the pass is easy.

Khoor to Subzwar:—

1. Halt anywhere, all Kuveer, except 1 farsang of sand, no water.
2. Peer Hajat, 30 farsangs, water, large villages in a valley, road level.
3. Duhan-i-Mambar, 5 farsangs. The road goes over a pass, which is easy. Water.
4. Dusht-Girdu, 5 farsangs. The road is level, no hills, water, supplies, many villages.

5. Deh-Noo, 6 farsangs. The road is level, water and supplies.
6. Sar-y-Chah, 5 farsangs, water, few supplies. The road is level.
7. Taoroom, 8 farsangs. The road is level, part over sand.
8. Sudduree, 5 farsangs. The road is level, few supplies, water.
9. Dariācheh, 5 farsangs. The road is level, water, few supplies.
10. Mazrai. The road is level, water.
11. Hyatabad, 7 farsangs. The road level, water, supplies.
12. Subzwar, 3 farsangs. Road level. This road has the Koh-Surteh range on the right from Dehrm, no hills on the left.

There are several roads from Beyaza to Tubbus:—

1. Mrehrjan, 4 farsangs, level.
2. Holwan, 24 farsangs. Kuveer, one well.
3. Chah Regu, 8 farsangs, water, salt from well.
4. Chardeh, 6 farsangs, village, supplies, and good water.
5. Tubbus, 4 farsangs, large town.
6. Gurmah, 5 farsangs. The road is level, crosses a low pass, Godar Chogas, village.
7. Khoor, 5 farsangs, level, large village.
8. Holwan, 22 farsangs, Kuveer or Chah Melegi 18 farsangs; then, as above, this is called the Rah-y-Meean.
9. The Rah-y-Tabago. To Khoor as above, then Holwan 22 farsangs, as above.
10. To Khoor-Chastab, 4 farsangs, water; Shakarab, 3 farsangs, water; Chah Melegi, 8 farsangs, water; Chah Alinag, 6 farsangs, water; Chah Regu, 8 farsangs, water; Chardeh, 6 farsangs; Tubbus, 4 farsangs.

The direct road from Biabanah to Yuzd is as follows:—

1. Hajeeabad, 8 farsakhs south. The road goes from the village of Beyaza first south-west to turn the Koh Soorkh, then south-east between hills, and is very good. This village is situated between the Koh Soorkh and the Seeah Koh. There are about 10 houses in it, and water, and a few supplies are procurable.
2. Zareen, 9 farsakhs. The road is over sand, then over a hard plain with the Seeah Koh on the right.
3. Toot, 6 farsakhs south-west. The road is over a level plain, with hills on both sides. There is a village here of 15 houses, where water and a few supplies can be got.
4. Yuzd, 15 farsakhs. The road is quite level and good all the way.

Roads also go from Toot to Ardekan; 12 farsakhs; Khuranuck, 8 farsakhs, with no villages. 3 farsakhs from Toot is the Godar Shor pass, which is the point at which the roads split. The road is quite level, having the range Koh Doombhuft on the right, and none on the left near.

From Beeabunnuck to Naeen the road starts from Khoor and goes to—

1. Gurmab, 5 farsakhs, being good.
2. Huft Temam, 3 farsakhs. The road crosses a pass, then there is a village with water.
3. Abassabad, 6 farsakhs. The road is level through hills in one place. Here water is to be got, but no supplies.
4. Moosajueeb, 6 farsakhs. The road is level. Here is a howz of water.
5. Anaruck, 8 farsakhs. The road is level and good. This is a large place of 1,000 houses, situated in a valley between hills, and water and supplies are procurable.
6. Chasma Zaghab, 5 farsakhs. The road is level. Water to be got here.
7. Naeen, 10 farsakhs. The road is level.

There is said to be another road as follows, to the north of the above:—

1. Ghufoorabad, 3 farsakhs. The road is level. Water procurable. Small village of 10 houses.
2. Chah Afzul, 5 farsakhs. The road is quite good. Water.
3. Zooroomut, 4 farsakhs. The road is level. Water.
4. Alum, 6 farsakhs. The road goes over sand. Water.
5. Chāft, 6 farsakhs. The road is level. Water.
6. Chah Khurbooza, 6 farsakhs. The road is through hills for 1 farsakh, and then level. Water.
7. Mualla, 2 farsakhs. The road is good, over a pass.
8. Anarah, 4 farsakhs. The road is quite good. Thence to Naeen as above.

From Naeen a road goes on to Kashan, as follows:—

1. Nehistanuck, 7 farsakhs. The road is good, over a level plain. A village, water, some supplies, Serai and Chuppurkhana.
2. Jangām, 7 farsakhs. The road is level but stony, with hills on either side. Water, supplies, Serai and Chuppurkhana.
3. Ardistan, 5 farsakhs. The road is good, over a level plain. Large village, Serai, Chuppurkhana, water, and all supplies.
4. Mogbor, 5 farsakhs. The road is good, over a level plain. Large village, water, supplies, Serai and Chuppurkhana.
5. Kiltabar, 5 farsakhs. The road is quite good, over level pla Village, water, supplies, Serai and Chuppurkhana.
6. Bozabad, 5 farsakhs. The road is good, over earth plain. Vill water, supplies, fine Serai and Chuppurkhana.
7. Kashan, 7 farsakhs. The road is good, over level plain. All plies.

The following routes are some of those given me by poor old Hoosei Alee:—

1. Tubbus to Subzwar.

1. Chardeh, 10 miles. The road I came by.
2. Shirgish, 18 miles. The road ascends gradually. Water, villages and a few supplies.
3. Pushnagaroo, 12 miles. The road is bad. Village, water, few supplies.
4. Deh-i-Now, 12 miles. The road is bad. Village, water, few supplies.
5. Chah Shor, 12 miles. The road is bad. Bad water, no supplies.
6. Rabat Chah, 24 miles. The road is bad. Good water, supplies.
7. Keogi, 12 miles. The road is level, between hills. Good water, no supplies.
8. Zungee Shah, 18 miles. The road is level. Village, good water, a few supplies.
9. Burdus Kund, 12 miles. The road is level. Village, good water, a few supplies.
10. Kulla-i-Maidan, 18 miles. The road goes over a pass. Good water, a few supplies.
11. Shamkoh, 18 miles. The road is bad. Village, good water, a few supplies.
12. Abdoolabad, 15 miles. The road is bad. Village, good water, a few supplies.
13. Subzwar, 15 miles.

2. Tubbus to Birjund:—

1. Aspak, 24 miles.
2. Dahok, 21 miles.
3. Arbabad, 18 miles.
4. Khoor, 27 to 36 miles.
5. Toghab, 18 miles.
6. Birjund, 18 miles. From Khoor there is another road to Koosf, 24 miles.

Birjund, 12 miles.

Tubbus to Mushudd:—

1. Durra Bet, 15 miles. The road is good, crosses a low pass, the God-ar-Ashogo. Village, water, supplies.
2. Deh Mahumud, 15 miles. The road is good and level. Village, water, supplies.
3. Aspak, 15 miles. The road crosses a low pass. Water, supplies, village.

4. Naigenoo, 18 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, supplies.
5. Howz Hadjee Meerak, 18 miles. The road is level and good. Water, no supplies.
6. Kasimabad, 12 miles. The road is level and good. Water, no supplies.
7. Fakhrabad, 15 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, few supplies.
8. Yoonsee, 18 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, few supplies.
9. Faizabad, 15 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, few supplies.
10. Daghabad, 12 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, few supplies.
11. Toorbat Haidan, 12 miles. The road is level and good. Village, water, few supplies.
12. Kama, 12 miles. The road is bad and very stony. Village, water, few supplies.
13. Kulla Shahyada, 12 miles. The road is good and level. Village, few supplies.
14. Kulla Kafar, 15 miles. The road is bad, crosses a pass. Water, few supplies.
15. Shureefabad, 18 miles. The road is good and level. Water, few supplies.
16. Mushudd, 18 miles. The road is not good. Water, few supplies.

The following routes were taken down from this man by Kazee Syud Ahmud, on his arrival at Tehran. The fifth route is that he travelled by.

1. Toon to Tubbus :—
   1. Rabat-i-Shor, 7 farsakhs. Rabat with howz.
   2. Bushrooya, 7 farsakhs.
   3. Ispāk, 6 farsakhs.
   4. Deh Mahumud, 5 farsakhs.
   5. Durrah Beed, 5 farsakhs.
   6. Tubbus, 4 farsakhs.

   Water procurable everywhere from kunats and Ab Ambars.

2. Tubbus to Toorsheez :—
   1. Durrah Beed, 4 farsakhs.
   2. Deh Mahumud, 5 farsakhs.
   3. Ispāk, 5 farsakhs.
   4. Begnan, 6 farsakhs.
   5. Howz-i-Hadjee Meerak, 7 farsakhs.

6. Fukhrabad, 8 farsakhs.
7. Sardak, 6 farsakhs.
8. Jafarabad, 4 farsakhs.
9. Toorsheez, 5 farsakhs.

Villages everywhere, and water plentiful.

3. Toorsheez to Mushudd :—

1. Aleeābād, 5 farsakhs.
2. Toorbat-y-Eesa Khan, 6 farsakhs.
3. Shor Hisār, 6 farsakhs.
4. Kila Shahzada, 4 farsakhs.
5. Ribat-i-Sofeed, 4 farsakhs.
6. Shareefabad, 6 farsakhs.
7. Mushudd, 6 farsakhs.

4. Birjund to Tubbus :—

1. Hussoonabad, 7 farsakhs.
2. Khoosp, 6 farsakhs.
3. Arbabad, 9 farsakhs.
4. Dhook, 8 farsakhs.
5. Ispāk, 5 farsakhs.
6. Kureet, 6 farsakhs.
7. Tubbus, 4 farsakhs.

Water plentiful everywhere but 4th and 6th tage.

5. Tubbus to Tehran :—

1. Chardeh, 4 farsakhs.
2. Shorab, 6 farsakhs.
3. Jafaria, 7 farsakhs.
4. Chah Mehjee, 7 farsakhs. Only very salt water here.
5. Howz-i-Mirza, 14 farsakhs. No water here.
6. Jomin, 6 farsakhs.
7. Chah-y-Alee, 8 farsakhs.
8. Chah-y-Zurd, 7 farsakhs.
9. Chah-i-Khorasanee, 6 farsakhs.
10. Dokala, 10 farsakhs.
11. Lajana, 9 farsakhs.
12. Simnan, whence to Tehran by the main road by Lasgord and Deh Nimak, 8 farsakhs.

From Joman to Simnan water very scarce.

6. Subzwar to Toorsheez :—

1. Sar-i-Mazar.
2. Aka Hasan Nazir.

3. Khor.
4. Baro Maskan.
5. Sultanabad or Toorsheez.

Water plentiful.

7. Toorsheez to Birjund:—

1. Saadeedee, 6 farsakhs.
2. Sardak, 5 farsakhs.
3. Bejistoon, 6 farsakhs.
4. Buro, 6 farsakhs.
5. Toon, 4 farsakhs.
6. Sorayoon, 6 farsakhs.
7. Chahak-i-Mohamadabad, 8 farsakhs.
8. Chah-i-Bayaban, 8 farsakhs.
9. Khoosp, 7 farsakhs.
10. Birjund, 4 farsakhs.

Water plentiful, villages everywhere.

Tubbus to Seestan:—

1. Kurit, 4 farsakhs. The road is good over level. Village and supplies, and water.
2. Aspak, 3 farsakhs. The road is good on level; hills on left. Village, water, and supplies.
3. Howz Mahomed Kasim, 4 farsakhs. The road goes over Godar Khulookee, pass easy, practicable for camels, and then level. Water, no supplies.
4. Dohok, 3 farsakhs. The road is not very good, through hills, with a pass between for 2 farsakhs, then good over level. Village, water, and supplies.
5. Rezgo, 2 farsakhs. The road is level and good. Good water, no supplies.
6. Tulkhal, 7 farsakhs. The road is quite good. Water bad, no supplies.
7. Goonbut Jung, or Pushta Jung, 9 farsakhs. The road is level. Water, few supplies.
8. Khoor, 3 farsakhs. The road is good and level. Water, supplies, village.
9. Chah (a well), 6 farsakhs. The road is level. Good water, howz, and no supplies.
10. Chah (a well), 4 farsakhs. The road is level. No supplies, water from howz.
11. Sar-i-Sibchah, 6 farsakhs. The road is good and level. Water and supplies. This road is very near that of Khanikoff.
12. Howz Arab Khona, 4 farsakhs. The road is good and level. Water from howz, few supplies, near hills.

13. Chah Zaloo, 6 farsakhs. The road is good, level. Water, supplies, hill on either side.
14. Charfarsakh, 4 farsakhs. The road is good, but hilly. Water and supplies.
15. Neh, 4 farsakhs. The road is good.

To Khoor, 8th stage, as above.

Tubbus to Birjund :—

1. Dashtagird, 5 farsakhs. The road is level and good. Village, water, supplies few.
2. To Ghah, 5 farsakhs. The road is good and level. Village, water, supplies few. Kusf is on the right, at 9 farsakhs.
3. Birjund, 5 farsakhs. The road is good and level.

Bashrooya to Kirman :—

1. Arisk, 4 farsakhs. The road is level, over plain. Village, with water and supplies.
2. Dohok, 6 farsakhs. The road is level, hills on right. Village, with water and supplies.
3. Zanavgun, 6 farsakhs. The road is level. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Burj-i-Garm, 5 farsakhs. The road is level. Water bad, no supplies.
5. Haiband, 7 farsakhs. The road is good, but at end crosses a pass. Village, with water and supplies.
6. Howz-i-Khan, 5 farsakhs. The road is level over Luth. Water, no supplies.
7. Chehlpaya, 7 farsakhs. The road over Luth. Water bad.
8. Darbund, 8 farsakhs. The road is over Luth. A serai, water, and a few supplies here.
9. Lovar, 8 farsakhs. The road is level. Water, with village and supplies.
10. Howz, 5 farsakhs. The road is level, through waste. Water, no supplies.
11. Godar-i-Khorasani, 6 farsakhs. The road crosses a pass. Water, with village, no supplies.
12. Sarasia, 6 farsakhs. The road is good. Village, with water and supplies.
13. Kirman, 7 farsakhs. The road is level.

The route from Toon to Birjund followed by the so-called Russian scientific expedition, which had explored the district a few years *before my arrival, is as follows*:—

1. *Sarayoon, 6 farsangs. The road goes south-west over a stony plain sloping upwards, with lofty hills on the left; passes some rocky isolated hills to Ayāz, 4 farsangs.* Here and there is a village,

with water and supplies, whence on, in 2 farsangs, is Sarayoon, a large village, situated under the hills. There is water at every farsang on this road.

2. Dostabad, 5 farsangs. The road ascends gently over a plain with a high chain on the left; all through cultivation, with a "howz" at every farsang; in two places a canal crosses the road. At 4 farsangs the hills from right contract the plain somewhat. After passing on the right a small village, the road descends a little to Dostabad. Thence there is another road by 1. Mahamadad; 2. Chahak; 3. Rolatasaddaolu; 4. Birjund.
3. Afrees, 8 farsangs. The road goes over a plain not far from the mountains on the left, which at some distance send out a spur. (In the plain itself is a group of isolated hills opposite, but not connected with it, or with another much more distant and much lower chain on the left. To the left is the large village of Teghab, and on the right, farther up, is Dasht, near the cross range.) This plain is of sandy and clayey soil, with much cultivation at first, but it then becomes saline, on reaching the cross group of hills at 3 farsangs. Salt vegetation disappears after passing two of these. Beyond the third is the village of Meeanjoo. The plain, still ascending, narrows here, and in two long farsangs farther are more isolated hills at the foot of which Afrees, a large village, with water and supplies.
4. Afzulabad, 7 farsangs. The road turns a little more south, and goes among the hills, at the foot of which Afrees lies, ascending at first gently through a wide valley, which gradually becomes narrower and steeper, to undulating ground, whence it descends pretty sharply into a wide plain, a continuation of the Toon plain. At 2 farsangs farther on is the village of Chahak, far to the right, and at 3 farsangs the plain ends. The road then mounts a ridge of cross-running hills (behind which is seen a similar ridge, and behind it the high range of Bageeran), which appear to extend from east to west, and connect ranges on the right and left with each other. At the 4 farsangs the road comes to a hollow ravine with peculiar saline vegetation, and then continue on between higher hills to the little village of Sheer, all of whose water is saline; then on through curious water-worn salt clay hills, very barren, to the larger village of Kundur, then upwards among ranges of hills to the salt encrusted bed of the Dehr-Cham-Shor, through which a very rapid though not very copious stream of drinkable water flows. Continuing along this stream a side valley is reached by a gentle ascent, on which is Afzulabad, a village with water and supplies.
5. Birjund, 5 farsangs. The road goes through the well-cultivated valley of the Tagintsch to the large village of Noghab, then upwards among rounded hills, then steeper to a rocky pass, which it crosses; thence there is a beautiful view into a deep, well-cultivated valley, at the

upper angle of which, on the left on high ground, is the large village of Shargoon. Beyond this the road goes at considerable height, and then up and down past gardens and fields, through dry watercourses to the little mountain village of Aghaldar, whence it ascends more steeply into the Bagheeran mountains, crossing which it descends, crossing a deep valley and falling and rising repeatedly, till it begins to follow the windings of a steeply ascending stony valley. Then a little pass is crossed to a side valley, from which the road again at once ascends among high and steep rocks to the highest point of the road, from whence on either side rise abrupt rocky crests. Thence the road descends for 2 farsangs along a valley, at first stony and pretty steep, through a saline watercourse overgrown with tamarisk; then the slope becomes less, and the valley is contracted farther down by high rocky walls into a deep ravine. Beyond this it widens again, and crosses to the fields of Kolat Kule Sinn, whence it follows the deeply-worn bed of a stream coming down from the mountains to a steeply sloping plain, and from which the road descends along a Karez by terraces to Birjund.

Toon to Subzwar:—

1. To Saadadi as below, *viâ* Baruk, Olmak, Bejistoon, and Sarduk.
2. Naobulhakim, 6 farsakhs. The road through Cupabadi. Village, with water and supplies.
3. Badraskand, 6 farsakhs. The road through waste. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Bijwat, 4 farsakhs. The road through Abadi. Village, with water and supplies.
5. Deh Zamin, 4 farsakhs (Sabzwar). The road goes over a low pass (Turshiz) and undulating country. Village, with water and supplies.

Toon to Toorsheez:—

1. Baruk, 4 farsakhs. The road is level, over Toon Valley. Village, with 300 houses, water and supplies.
2. Ohuak, 4 farsakhs. The road is over low hills, all easy. Village, with water and supplies, 100 houses.
3. Bejistoon, 4 farsakhs. The road is level. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Sardak, 5 farsakhs. The road is over level waste. Village on border of Kuveer, 50 houses, water and supplies.
5. Saadadi, 5 farsakhs. The road is over Kuveer. Village, 100 houses, water and supplies.
6. Toorsheez, 8 farsakhs. The road is through Abadi.

Toon to Nishapoor.

1. To Bijwat as in the above routes.
2. Chinaee, 4 farsangs. The road is over hills. Village, with water and supplies.
3. Sangird, 5 farsangs. The road is through hills and undulations. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Nishapoor.

The following is the route from Yuzd to Bundur Abbass by camels:—

1. Mahumudabad, on the Kirman road.
2. Mehreez. 5 farsakhs. The road is good, over a plain, with small stones.
3. Bandaroon, 5 farsakhs. The road is over undulating ground near the hills on the right. This is a small village, with few supplies and little water, and fuel is scarce.
4. Aleeantak, 7 farsakhs. The road is over a level gravelly plain for 3 farsangs, between hills close on either side, then over plain. No water. There is only a well here with a little water, and no supplies.
5. Khor Mehra, 11 farsangs. The road goes over low hills over earth, at last over stony ground. Supplies and water procurable. Dehay, a large village, is passed, where a halt can be made.
6. Shuhr-y-Babuk, 6 farsakhs. The road is over low hills and is very stony. Water and supplies are procurable here, which is a village of some size.
7. Deh Shootaran, 6 farsangs. The road is level. This is a small village, with little water, and no supplies.
8. Zaidabad, 9 farsangs. The road is good and crosses a low pass, and then goes over a salt plain.
9. Syadabad, 4 farsakhs. The road is good through cultivation. Here there is a village with water and supplies.
10. Sadatabad, 6 farsakhs. The road is good through cultivation. Water and supplies are procurable here.
11. Koroon, 5 farsangs. The road crosses over the beds of torrents several times, and is very stony. Here water and supplies are procurable.
12. Dushtab, 8 farsangs. The road goes through scrub jungle and over a stony plain, with many villages. Water and supplies are procurable.
13. Deh Surd, 5 farsangs. The road is very bad and stony, crossing low hills and descending frequently to river beds and going over low passes. Water and supplies are scarce here.
14. Deh Abdoola Khan, 5 farsangs. The road descends, but is not bad. Water and supplies are scarce in this place.
15. Ahmudee, 7 farsangs. The road descends the whole way and is very bad, crossing many hills.

16. Khoosh Koh, 11 farsangs. The road is very bad indeed, and scarcely practicable for horses, descending the whole way in a river bed, which is crossed 24 times. Water and supplies are procurable here.
17. Lukht-y-Sardareh, 5 farsangs. The road is bad, crossing low hills.
18. Bundur Abbass, 6 farsangs. The road is level and good, over a sandy plain.

N. B.—This route was given me by a merchant who had travelled it over twenty times.

Toorbat Ishak to Herat:—

1. Dowlatabad, 5 farsangs. The road is good, through Abadi. Village, with water and supplies.
2. Kulla Agha Hussun, 5 farsangs. The road is good, through waste. Village, with water and supplies.
3. Kulla Nao, 5 farsangs. The road is good, and crosses an easy pass. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Shuhr Nao, 5 farsangs. The road is good and level, through Abadi. Village, with water and supplies.
5. Mashad Rega, 4 farsangs. The road is good, through waste. Village, with water and supplies.
6. Kariz, 4 farsangs, or Tabad, 4 farsangs. The road is quite good and level. Thence to Herat, the road goes by Kohsan and Ghoreean.

The following is the route of Kanikoff's companions from Khaf to Goonabad:—

1. Asudabad, 17½ miles. The road on leaving rounds the end of the rocky range close to Rooee, and then goes along a dry watercourse, ascending at first gently, then steeper, between rounded hills (soil dry at first, then higher up very saline; scanty spring on opposite slope with saline efflorescence). It then descends this slope to the small village of Kullat, whence it again ascends between rounded hills. From the top of these, not far off, is the abrupt jagged range of Koh-y-Sinan; from this the road passes through a small basin-shaped valley, and then ascends by easy gradient to a valley of that picturesque ridge, whence the ridge is crossed at no very great height. Thence the road descends for 3½ miles over a stony, steeply inclined plain to a perfectly flat steppe, on which are several villages, the nearest of which is Asudabad.
2. Nowdehpishung, 42 miles. The road goes over the same plain as above to Kasimabad and Susanoff, on the left, after which it begins to ascend along a watercourse towards the Kaibar Koh, and when this is neared, it ascends steeper into a rocky ravine

with numerous small trees, whence it crosses the northern end of the Kaibar Koh by a not very high pass. Thence it descends by a pretty steep and rocky path to a ruined "rabat," without water, passing by curiously-shaped mountains with mushroom-like tops, whence it descends more gradually over a stony, sloping plain to a very broad clay and sand tract into a thicket of about 3½ miles broad. After passing through this it goes over a very broad tract of clay, bare of vegetation, overflowed in spring by rain and melted snow from the mountains, for 7 miles, to a howz with no water. Thence the road goes over a sandy clay tract, rising on the right into hills of drift sand, towards the end of the Geissur Koh. Thence it goes over first a gravelly, and then stony, and at last sandy, tract to some cultivated ground to Nowdehpishung.

3. Joomin, 76 miles. The road runs SW. through hills of driven sand to the large village of Bemurgh, at 5½ miles. It then ascends at first over a dry plain along an open water-course, and then goes through a narrow sandy valley among chains of hills which connect the mountains on the right and left, then over the ridge, whence the road descends over a broad, slightly inclined plain, highly irrigated and cultivated, with villages thickly studded around. Joomin is one of a cluster of eight villages which constitute the township of Goonabad.

While at Ghaeen I procured the following routes:—

Ghaeen to Herat, 50 farsangs:

1. Isfedeh, 8 farsangs. The road is good down the Ghaeen valley for 1 farsang, and passes through the village of Ishmishāt; it then enters hills and goes down the bed of a river, dry in hot weather for 1 farsang, whence it emerges on to a plain for the rest of the distance. At Khoonik, 2 farsangs, pass a large village. Here there are some supplies; the water, however, is brackish.
2. Bamrūd, 5 farsangs. The road is quite level, over a plain, the whole way. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
3. Charakhs, 4 farsangs. The road is quite level, over a plain. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
4. A well, 6 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. There is water here, but no supplies. The hills are about 1 farsang distant.
5. Gal Howz, 8 farsangs. The road level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
6. Ghorian, 8 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste, to 7 farsangs, when it goes over low hills.

Thence it goes by the main Mashad-Herat road. This road is dangerous from Charakhs to Ghorian, and is not much used by Kafilas, but it is quite practicable the whole way.

Ghaeen to Subzwar, in Afghanistan, 50 farsangs:—

1. Kala-Khooshk, 6 farsangs. The road goes for 4 miles over the Ghaeen plain, then enters hills, in which it continues the whole way. It is not difficult, but over easy passes. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
2. Tajow Chakhen, 6 farsangs. The road goes through hills and in the bed of a river, and is not difficult. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
3. Doroksh, 4 farsangs. The road is through hills, crossing low passes and one highish pass, but is not difficult. Here there is a large village, with water and supplies.
4. Gazee, 6 farsangs. The road is level for 2 farsangs, then between hills in the bed of a river. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
5. Booz Goolwarda, 3 farsangs. The road is between hills in the bed of a river for 1 farsang, then over waste. Here there is some water, but no supplies.
6. A howz, 4 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Here is water in a howz, but no supplies.
7. Chah Jumalee, 6 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. The water in the wells here is brackish, and there are no supplies.
8. Chahoozbukee, 8 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. The water in the wells here is brackish, and there are no supplies.
9. Kullat-y-Kallowntar, 8 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water in wells brackish, no supplies.
10. Aokal, 6 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Here is a village with water and supplies.
11. Subzwar, 3½ farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. At 1 farsang pass the village of Kā.

Ghaeen to Khaf:—

1. Boynabad, 6 farsangs. The road is good and level, between hills and in the bed of a river. Pass village Ismishāt at 1 farsang, Dezuk at 2 farsangs, and Kalat-y-Ghibgi at 3 farsangs. From this the road goes to Godar-i-Chung-y-Kalak, which it crosses; it is then level. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
2. Khaf, 12 farsangs. The road is quite level, over an uninhabited plain, for 8 farsangs to Kohkaibar; it then goes between hills in a valley with scrub jungle for 2 farsangs, then over a plain to Khaf.

Khaf to Subzwar, in Afghanistan:—

1. Masceeroo, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a salt plain. Here is water, but no supplies.

2. Kunar-y-Kapa, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
3. Chah Neela, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
4. Do Chahee Gowda, 5 farsangs. The road is good, between hills, and crosses a low pass. Water, no supplies.
5. Aodaroo, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
6. Dewaloon, 7 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
7. Chah Pooza Koo Mahamad Ishmail, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water, no supplies.
8. Aokal, 8 farsangs. The road goes between hills, and crosses an easy pass, Gaodar. Village, with water and supplies.
9. Subzwar, 3 farsangs.

The road from Birjund to Seestan is as follows:—

1. Boozd, 7 miles. The road is described in the body of the book.
2. Mood, 7 farsangs. The road is quite good up the Birjund valley. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
3. Sar-y-Beesheh, 5 farsangs. The road is quite level and good. A low hill crossed. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
4. Sailabad, 6 farsangs. The road is level, between hills. At 3 farsangs is the well of Chah Khoja Shafi. Sailabad is a village with bad water, and some supplies.
5. Chakar Daraza, 4 farsangs. The road is level for 2 farsangs; it goes through sand. The water here is brackish, and there are no supplies.
6. Khooshk, 4 farsangs. The road is level, but crosses a low pass close to the stage, where there is a village, with water and supplies.
7. Neh, 5 farsangs. The road is level by one route; a shorter road goes over the hills. There is a large village here, with water and supplies.
8. Aleeabad, 5 farsangs. The road is good, but crosses one easy pass. At 2 farsangs pass the well of Khooneek. Here there is a village, with water and supplies.
9. Bandan, 6 farsangs. The road is through and over low hills, and for 2 farsangs goes down a river-bed with hills on either side. This is a village, but the water is brackish. Supplies are procurable.
10. Shand, 8 farsangs. The road is quite level, over waste and sand. Water from river-bed. No supplies.
11. Nusseerabad, 8 farsangs. The road is over the dry bed of a lake and is quite good. A town.

Birjund to Furrah:—

1. The road is the same as above, to Sar-y-Beesheh.
2. Gazdis, 5 farsangs. The road is level, between hills. There is here a village, with bad water and a few supplies.
3. Kashmarun, 2 farsangs. The road goes over a rather difficult pass. There is water here, but no supplies.
4. Doroh, 5 farsangs. The road goes over the Godar-y-Mishun, which is difficult. There is a village, with water and supplies.
5. Hoosenabad, 3 farsangs. The road crosses a pass, Godar Gazdiz, and is easy. Here is a village, with bad water and no supplies.
6. Doroh, 6 farsangs. The road is bad, over hills, and crosses the Godar-y-Kulla Sungee, which is difficult.
7. Maojak, 5 farsangs. The road is bad crossing the Godar-y-Durd; this stage is difficult for camels. A spring of water here, but no supplies.
8. Haroot, 6 farsangs. The road is level and good. At 4 farsangs pass the well of Chah-y-Sugguk, where there is water. Water at stage from river-bed, but no supplies.
9. Kulla Kuh, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
10. Furrah, 10 farsangs. The road is level, over waste. Pass a well at 5 farsangs. A town.

Another road from Birjund to Furrah:—

1. To Guzeek the road is the same as that I followed, and which is described in the body of the book.
2. Kullat-y-Gubbeech, 4 farsangs. The road is good, and crosses an easy pass. Water here, but no supplies.
3. Charuck, 8 farsangs. The road is level, over waste. Water here, but no supplies.
4. Chah Roosee, 3 farsangs. The road is good, and crosses the Godar-y-Shabiak pass half-way, which is easy. Here is water, but no supplies.
5. Dahkāl, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Here is water, but no supplies.
6. Anardurra, 3 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Village, with water and supplies.
7. Do Chahee, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Here is water, but no supplies.
8. Furrah, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. A town.

Birjund to Subzwar, in Afghanistan:—

1. Sir-y-Chah, 5 farsangs. The road is good all the way, and crosses a low pass. Water here, but no supplies.

2. Noghāb, 5 farsangs. The road is good, over a waste. Here is a village, water, and supplies.
3. Ahwaz, 5 farsangs. The road is good, over a waste. Here is a village, with water and some supplies.
4. Goolwurda, 4 farsangs from Guzeek. The road is almost identical with that I followed.
5. Chushma Nimuck, 7 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste, and goes over a low hill. Here the water is bad, and there are no supplies.
6. Gurreechah Alanoo, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Water here is brackish, and there are no supplies.
7. Chah Babooree, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. The water here is brackish, and there are no supplies.
8. Karez Dusht, 5 farsangs. The road is level, over a waste. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
9. Owkal, 3 farsangs. The road is good, over a plain, with some villages. Here is a village, with water and supplies.
10. Subzwar, 3 farsangs. The road is good, over a plain, with some villages. Here is a town, with water and supplies.

There is a direct road from Farimun to Nishapur, as follows:—

1. Hasanabad, 5 farsangs. The road is level over plain for 2 farsangs to Farahgird, thence to Ahmadabad, 2 farsangs, it is quite good, crossing a low pass, and thence level. Village, water, supplies.
2. Saghabad, 6 farsangs. The road is quite level, through cultivation and passes, through the villages of Kela, Syadabad, Dizbad, Husenabad, Dishdish. Village, water, supplies.
3. Nishapur, 5 farsangs. The road is quite good over the main road.

Surrukhs to Kullat-y-Nadir:—

Chacha, 12 farsangs. The road goes over an undulating plain the whole way to the Durbund Chacha, a narrow defile close to the fort. Water at Chilkeman-i-Durbund, 8 farsangs, and fort of 50 houses.

Kullat, 10 farsangs. The road goes through a defile for 3 farsangs to Karategan (village, water, supplies, 100 houses), and is level and good. Thence one road, practicable for artillery, goes along outside Kullat to the south for 7 farsangs, and is level and good; another road goes by Kushtani, 2 farsangs (level); then there is an ascent to the Kotul Kushtani, which is very difficult—horsemen cannot ride up; then on, for one farsang, to Aktash (village, water, supplies, 100 houses); then on to Kula Zao (bad road); then to Sirizar, 1 farsang (bad road); thence, ½ farsang descend to Band-y-Dukhtar; then along the valley into Deh-Goombuz, the principal village. Another road goes outside the hills, thus:

Shorakh, below Muydaran, one day (water, forage, fuel); thence the road is over a plain to Zangun, 1 farsang (water, fuel, forage, old fort); Chilkeman, 3 farsangs (water); thus same as above.

Chacha (outside) 3 farsangs. The road is over a plain. Water from river plenty, fuel, forage.

Mehra, 6 farsangs. The road is over plain. Old town with ruins; water from Karategan river; fuel, forage.

Chardeh, 5 farsangs. The road is over plain. Old fort; a few Toorkmun tents; little cultivation; water from Kullat stream.

Thence to Nafta Gate is three farsangs, of which 2 farsangs is over plain; then the road goes through Durbund Khojeh defile; roadway good, but very narrow, with commanding heights. From Nafta to Kullat is 2½ farsangs.

Surrukhs to Durraguz. To Chacha, *vide* above.

1. Doshakh, 7 or 8 farsangs. The road goes over a plain the whole way to this place, which is on a river draining from Chacha, and 1 farsang from the hills. No village; water, fuel, and forage.
2. Khoja Ahmad, 7 farsangs. The road is over a waste the whole way. Water, fuel, forage.
3. A Fort, Baverd, 7 farsangs. The road is over a waste plain near foot of hills. 200 houses of Duraguzi. Water, supplies.
4. Durraguz, 9 farsangs. The road goes through a defile to a pass 1 farsakh Kizil Kotal, which is difficult for camels. This road is dangerous on account of Toorkmuns, and the road which would be used would be by Kullat.

There is, however, another road from Surrukhs to Durraguz, which goes as far as Chardeh, the same as to Kullat Nadir.

Then to Aliabad, 6 farsangs, the road over plain along foot of hills; village, water, supplies; water from the Archingun stream: thence to Baward 6 farsangs, falling in with road by the Attruk as above.

Surrukhs to Kohsan:—

1. Pul-i-Khatun, 8 farsangs. The road is quite level, over a plain on the left bank of Tejund River; at 2 farsangs, pass Kala Daolatabad; at 4 Naowjabad. Here an old bridge of stone. No village, water, fuel; forage plentiful.
2. Chasma Saoz, 7 farsangs. The road crosses to right bank and goes among hills, and is not very good; and it crosses a pass, Kotal Istakhanchil, at the end. It is practicable for guns. Here is abundance of water, fuel, and forage. At 4 farsangs old serai of Gulran, or Kalabagh.
3. Kohsan, 6 farsangs. The road is good along bank of river over

plain. Village, water, supplies. Thence to Ghorian. This is the road all the Tekkeh "alamans" come by, and therefore any peaceable individual would as soon think of going by it as of going to hell willingly. Some men I met had been carried off by the Toorkmuns; but as they were made to go night and day, and thrashed all the way, they took no count of distance or country. However, the "alamans" generally go back in three days, and as they probably go as quick as it can be done, it is probably about 150 miles. The road is probably quite good, and capable of being made practicable for artillery, if it is not already so. There is water all the way, as it is the bed of the Hurree Rood, and there is also great abundance of forage and grazing, but no habitations anywhere.

Surrukhs to Bala Murghab:—

1. Koin, 6 farsangs. The road is over a waste the whole way. There is a well of salt water; fuel, forage.
2. Bowardashik, 8 farsangs. The road is over the Dasht, without water; well of good water; forage at times; fuel.
3. Baighiz, 8 farsangs. The road is over a plain; to this, on the Murghab encampments of Syats; water, fuel, forage abundant.
4. Marochak, 8 farsangs. The road goes along the bank of the Murghab; camps, water, fuel, forage abundant.
5. Murghab, 4 farsangs. The road goes along the banks of the river. Here a fort, with supplies; water, fuel, and forage.

Mushudd to Surrukhs by Muzdaran:—

1. Koygun, the same as described in my route.
2. Maiomai, 16 miles. The road is quite good, over easy undulating ground. Village, water, supplies.
3. Muzdaran, 27 miles. The road leads under the hills, crossing low easy spurs. Village, water, supplies.
4. Surrukhs, 36 miles. The road crosses the Koh Muzdaran by a very steep difficult pass, which it would be very difficult to force, and then goes straight across the desert, with no water for the last 24 miles.

There is a road which goes from Mushudd to Kullat, as follows:—

1. Tabat Kun, 6 farsangs. The road goes to Kenigosha, 3 farsangs, over valley, and then about a mile from Kenigosha through the defile Durbund Zao Khuni a short way, and through cultivation.
2. Giss, 2 farsangs. The road ascends with a difficult incline, but is practicable for guns, being the road used always for this purpose; thence the road descends to Ab Garm, where there is water, and an old rabat of Shah Abbass. Time and fuel and forage in plenty.

3. Amirabad, 3 farsangs. The road is very bad and difficult, but practicable for guns over hills and through defiles.
4. Chacha, thence the road goes down the bed of the river, and is good for 3 farsangs.

There is another difficult road, not practicable for artillery, and only used by single horsemen, that goes from Mushudd to Kullat.

1. Permet, village, 100 houses, water, supplies.
2. Guzligi, 6 farsangs (village, water, supplies), and is good over a valley the whole way.
3. Khaor, 2 farsangs, though a defile (water from the Chacha) called Dahna Khaor. The road is very difficult and stony, ascending over spurs.
4. Gangi Kala, 3 farsangs, over hills, and is very difficult. Village, water, supplies (water from the Karategan river).
5. Karategan, 3 farsangs, is pretty good, up and down.
6. Thence, *vide* Route from Surrukhs to Kullat, *ante*.

The road from Kullat-y-Nadir to Durraguz by the Attruk is as follows:—

1. To Archingun (village, 60 houses, water, supplies), 3 farsangs, the road is good and level, through a defile or glen west of Igdaleek.
2. Baward, 7 farsangs. Thence the road goes through a defile, the Dahna Archingoon, about a mile, and then through a plain along the foot of the hills the whole way. Village, 100 houses of Toorkmun subjects of Durraguz. Water from the river of Laeen.
3. Bawago, 6 farsangs. The road is over a plain along the foot of the hills. This is a large village of 300 houses. Pass village of Kizilja at 1 farsang (40 houses); Dargana at 2 farsangs (100 houses); Khasru, 1 farsang (100 houses). Water and supplies; water from the Shamstu Khan river.
4. Durraguz, 4 farsangs (2 farsangs are over a plain); then to Kizil Kotal there is an easy ascent over low hills, and then is level in.

N.B.—The water of Laeen goes to Khemabad, thence to Baward.

Kullat Nadir to Merv:—

1. To Chardeh, *vide* Surrukhs to Kullat-y-Nadir, in body of the book.
2. Thence to Kulla Oraz is about 12 hours: this is on the Tejund river. The road is over a plain with no water. Here there is an old village. Water is plentiful, and fuel, jungle, and forage plenty.
3. Thence a road goes on over a plain with no water to Shetli, for 24 hours. There is no village here. Water from a well; plenty of fuel and forage.
4. Thence to Merv is about 10 hours, still over a plain.

Another road goes to Durt Kuli:—

1. (4 wells), which is about 15 hours over a plain. Water for a few men; fuel and forage plenty.
2. Thence to Chah Burkās, about 10 hours, over plain. Water, fuel, and forage here.
3. Merv, about 10 hours; more still over plain.

There is a road which goes from Kuchan to Subzwar, as follows:—

1. Mahamadabad, 4 farsangs. The road is level for one farsang to Darbandi, thence over a hill for one farsang, to Kara Shah Verdi, thence, over a difficult pass, Hadjee Aghazi, for 2 farsangs. There is here a village, and water and a few supplies are procurable.
2. Yām, 5 farsangs. The road is bad over a pass called Kotul Sukhani, the foot of which is reached in 2 farsangs, whence ½ a farsang is over a bad pass; thence it is pretty good. Here there is a village, but the water is salt. A few supplies are procurable. This place is situated on the river Shurkāb.
3. Burkabeh, 6 farsangs. The road goes down the river all the way (for 2 miles it is bad) through a defile. Here is a village of 50 houses, with water and supplies.
4. Subzwar, 5 farsangs. The road is difficult over low hills for 2 farsangs, then it is level in.

Another road goes as follows:—

1. Besh Aghach, 5 farsangs. The road level and good the whole way. A village of 100 houses, with water and supplies.
2. Abdulagao, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good the whole way. A village of 60 houses, with water and supplies.
3. Sultanabad, 6 farsangs. The road is level and good the whole way. A village of 100 houses.
4. Subzwar, 6 farsangs. The road is level and good the whole way.

There is a road from Bujnoord to Subzwur, as follows:—

1. Isfaram, 6 farsangs. The road as far as Fèroza, 2 farsangs, is level and open, then it enters the defile of Dahna Feroza, bounded, by high cliffs, and goes through this for one farsang to Girwa; thence it goes over the Kotal Siahkhana (not practicable in winter for four months for animals) for 1 farsang. Thence it is good in. This is a large village, with water and supplies.
2. Jowen, 6 farsangs. The road is good, over a waste, without villages all the way: two little ascents passed over. This is a large village, with water and supplies.
3. Subzwar, 7 farsangs. The road is good and goes over a low hill, with very easy ascent.

The Eelkhanee gave me the following road from Bujnoord to Chek-ashlar:—

1. Mana, 5 farsangs. The road ascends pretty steeply over the Akhir hill, and then descends steeply to Mana, a large village, with water, fuel, and forage.
2. Chehlguzar, 7 farsangs. The road is level, descending gradually along the river; but it is narrow and stony. Water, fuel, and forage abundant.
3. Marawa Tapeh, 6 farsangs. The road first ascends pretty steeply, but is not difficult from 1 farsang to the top of the Kotal Hoonkai, and then descends again to the river. (There is no practicable road by the river, which is confined between cliffs.) Thence the road goes along the bank of the river. Here there is water, fuel, and forage in abundance. This Kotal is the only difficult place, but it has been crossed by guns.
4. Dahna Sozish, 6 farsangs. The road is good along the bank of the river all the way. Here water, fuel, and forage are abundant.
5. Genjai, 5 farsangs. The road is good along the bank of the river all the way. Here water, fuel, and forage are abundant.
6. Chatki, 5 farsangs. The road as above. This is the junction of the Chandyr and the Attruk rivers. Water, fuel, and forage are abundant.

Thence to Chakishlar is 15 farsangs along the river. It is never travelled except by Toorkmuns, but the road is quite level, and water, fuel, and forage almost everywhere, with numerous camps of nomads on the banks. This road is practicable for guns.

From Mana a road goes on to Garm Khan, and is good, but through a narrow defile along the side of the river. Garm Khan is a village with water, fuel, forage, and supplies.

Thence to Shirwan is 6 farsangs. The road is good by the river, and is narrow, in places. Thence to Mushudd the road goes by Koochan and Ratkan.

The Goorgan road from Bujnoord, to Astrabad is as follows:—

1. Simalghan, 6 farsangs. The road ascends gently over good road of earth for 3 farsangs, then descends equally easy to Sunalghan, a large village, with water and supplies. At 3 farsangs pass village, where a halt can be made.
2. Rabat Karabil, 7 farsangs. The road goes for 3 farsangs to Chummunbeet up a valley draining to Simalghan, and is level, though rather stony. Here a halt can be made, excellent water and forage are abundant, and fuel is procurable. From this the road ascends gradually to Chalbash, at the top of the range. Here also there is a spring and forage. Thence there is an easy descent to

Rabat, where there is an old serai, and water and forage are abundant, and fuel is procurable.

3. Pukhli Kula, 6 farsangs. The road is quite good and goes down a valley about 5 miles broad, which drains to the Goorgan. Water, forage, and fuel are here very abundant. There is an old serai here.
4. Goorgan, 6 farsangs. The road is level, through a jungle. Here are many large camps of Goklan Toorkmuns, and water, fuel, and forage are abundant, and some supplies procurable.
5. Sangar, 4 farsangs. The road is level between foot of hills on the left of the river, and is quite good throughout. There is a village here, and water, fuel, and forage are abundant. This place is also called Pisrah and Haji Lar.
6. Nowdeh, 4 farsangs. The road is good at foot of hills on the left, through jungle for a part of the way. There is here a village, with water, fuel, and forage abundant, and some supplies.
7. Rah Mian, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good all the way descending the valley. Here is a village, with water, fuel, and forage abundant, and some supplies.
8. Finderis, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good, through jungle all the way nearly. Here is a village; water, fuel, forage abundant, and some supplies.
9. Kotul, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good through jungle, but is heavy in places from mud. Village; water, fuel, forage abundant, and some supplies.
10. Guliabad, 4 farsangs. The road is level and good through jungle. Village: water, fuel, forage abundant, some supplies.
11. Astrabad, 4 farsangs. The road as above.

The following route is that followed by travellers going from Shahrood to Yuzd. To Damghan by the regular road, thence Damghan to Yuzd:—

1. Torat, 4 farsangs. The road is good, over waste. Village, with water; few supplies.
2. Golaki, 12 farsangs. The road as above, no water on road. Water; no supplies.
3. Reshm, 3 farsangs. The road is good and crosses a low easy hill called Koh Tang-i-Reshm.
4. Hussun, 2 farsangs. The road is good, over plain. Village, with water; few supplies.
5. Sandak, 28 farsangs. The road over desert, no water; 24 hours for horses, 36 for camels. Large village, with water, 150 houses; few supplies. Khur, 12 farsangs towards east from this.
6. *—5 farsangs. The road over level waste. Water; no supplies.

* Note by publisher. No name given.

7. Zurumat, 6 farsangs. Road as above, at foot of Koh Zurumat. Water from spring; no supplies.
8. Arusun, 5 farsangs. Road as above. Water in bed of river; no supplies.
9. Chūpūnūm, 4 farsangs. Road as above. Water brackish, from well; no supplies (6 farsangs from Anarak).
10.*—4 farsangs. The road is good, but crosses a low hill, easy. Water from Howz, after rain; if not, a spring up the hill, 1 farsang.
11. Chah Pelang, 6 farsangs. The road is good and level. Water salt, from well; no supplies.
12. Howz, 5 farsangs. The road is good, crosses a low pass. Water from Howz.
13. Hi Goor, 6 farsangs. The road is good. Water.
14. Ardekan, 4 farsangs. The road is good, between hills. Water, large village, supplies.
15. Yuzd, 12 farsangs. (*Vide ante.*) This is the regular caravan road between Yuzd and Shahrood, and is regularly used every winter, about a dozen Kaplas coming annually, of from 50 to 200 camels each. There are no supplies on it, but forage for camels is, generally speaking, abundant; and except between Sandah and Husein, there is sufficient water for small numbers at each stage. From Husein the road splits and goes to Semnan, by which to Sari is the quickest route from Yuzd to the Caspian.

* Note by publisher. No name given.

APPENDIX III.

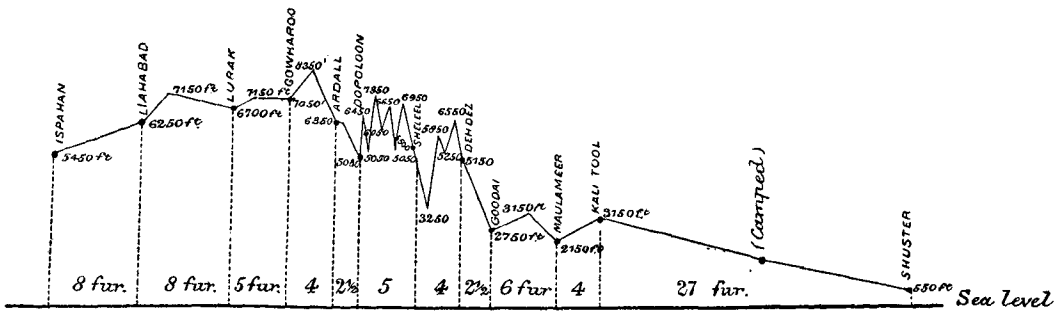
RIVADENEYRA'S ROUTE, KHORAMABAD TO DIZFUL.

The most direct route is seven stages, but is very difficult. This route détours NW., then S. from Madian Rud, joining the direct road at Ab-i-Zal. This is comparatively easy. At all stages water is procurable in abundance.

1. Chengori, elevation 4,550 feet, 3·1 miles.
2. Sar-i-ab, elevation 4,530 feet, 9·3 miles. A river here joins from the Khoramabad road.
3. Pai-Pul-i-Kashkan, 3,900 feet, 10·6 miles; 3 furlongs west of this the Madian Rud joins the Khoramabad road.
4. Chenar Burda Kal, 5050 feet, 10·6 miles.
5. Pul Madian, 4,350 feet, 13·6 miles. Wood scarce, plentiful before.
6. Alee Gigan, 4,450 feet, 16·7 miles.
7. Pul-i-Dukhtar, 3,000 feet, 10·6 miles.
8. Ab-i-Garm, 1,950 feet, 18·6 miles. Two narrow passes traversed.
9. Pul-i-Tang, 1,880 feet, 10·6 miles. Cliffs very narrow.
10. Ab-i-Zal, 2,020 feet, 10·6 miles. River joins the Kerkha river.
11. Huseina, 1,900 feet, 18·6 miles. Cultivable land commences. Hitherto only pasture.
12. Salihabad, 1,175 feet, 18·6 miles. Half way across the Bala Rūd and enter the plain of Khuzistan.
13. Dizful, 3·7 miles.

TABLE OF HEIGHTS AND DISTANCES FROM ISPAHAN TO SHUSTER VIA ARDALL.

N.B. Heights taken by a Negretti & Zambra's Aneroid.



II. TABLE OF HEIGHTS AND DISTANCES FROM ISPAHAN TO SHOOSTUR VIA ARDALL. [*To face page* 231.

APPENDIX IV.

MR. MACKENZIE'S ROUTE FROM ISPAHAN TO SHOOSTUR.

As this route has never appeared in print, I am glad the kindness of Mr. Mackenzie enables me to publish it here.

Ispahan to Shoostur, *viâ* Ardall:—

1. Siahabad, 8 farsakhs, 9 hours, 6,250 feet above the level of the sea. Proceed from Julfa in a SW. direction, through cultivation. At Pal Varzun cross Zendarood river by a good stone bridge. At 1½ farsangs from bridge, slight and easy ascent up Gardan-i-Gopiell over spur. Thence no water or vegetation for 3 farsangs, when river above is again met in the district of Upper Lenjun. Follow its course through cultivation to Pul-i-Kalaah village, where cross by stone bridge. After this the road leaves the Zendarood. Supplies and water abundant. Road throughout practicable for carriages.
2. Sīrak, 8 farsangs, 8½ hours, 6,700 feet. The road ascends at once to Gardan-i-Rokh, 7,750 feet, 1½ hours, thence by easy gradual descent to Sīrak. Road practicable throughout. Supplies and water procurable. Three roads from here to Ardall—1, by Salagur and Chaghahor as below; 2, by Gardan-i-Zereh and 3, by the Tang Darkash Varkash.
3. Gaoharu, 5 farsangs, 5 hours, 7,050 feet. The road is level, over fine alluvial soil, which is heavy after rain. Gass round the base of the Koh-i-Jumbeh to the left, whence are springs which go to the Karun river at 4 farsangs, gradual and easy ascent up Gardan-i-Pasaondeh 7,150 feet, whence descent short and steep. Road good and practicable for carriages. Village, with water and supplies.
4. Ardall, 4 farsangs, 6½ hours, 6,350 feet. In one hour pass village of Chaghahor, whence road good to the Gardan-i-Chalarzuneh, 8,350 feet, where the ascent is difficult, and would require improvement to make it practicable for carriages. On the Ardak side the hill is deep and precipitous, but the road goes by easy gradient along the sides, and is here practicable. The road is soft after rain. Village, with water and supplies.

5. Do Pulan, 2½ farsangs, 4 hours, 5,050 feet. The road passes over good but undulating ground for 1 farsang, when reach Kotal Gul Merza, where there is a steep descent of 1,000 feet to 5,350 feet, to a fine stream, a feeder of the Karun river. The road then follows the course of this through a very narrow valley, with high precipitous mountains on either side. Road passable for mules, but requires making for carriages, especially on Kotal Gul Merza. Village and water, but no supplies.
6. Shahid, 5 farsangs, 10 hours, 5,550 feet. The road crosses a bridge at Dossulān and immediately another over a feeder of the Karun, and then proceeds due west for ¾ farsang along a good road to a small village on the river at the foot of a steep hill. This march is very arduous from constant ascents and descents, but the road is good. The ascents are—1, ascent to 6,450 feet, descent to 5,050 feet; 2, ascent to 7,350 feet, descent to 6,050 feet; 3, ascent to 6,650 feet, descent to 5,050 feet; 4, ascent to 6,950 feet, descent to 5,550 feet. At 7½ hours the village of Sakhun is passed, which would make a better halting-place. Village, with water; few supplies.
7. Dehdiz, 4 farsangs, 6½ hours, 5,150 feet. Descent easy and gradual to one of the main feeders of the Karun, 3,250 feet, which cross by a wicker bridge 15 yards broad, across deep fissure in rocks (the crossing for animals below is dangerous); then ascend to 5,850 feet, and descend again to 5,250 feet; ascend by a steep road to 6,550 feet, whence descend to Dehdiz. Village, with water and supplies.
8. Godar Balutak, 2½ farsangs, 3 hours. The road descends easily and gradually through a valley, and is good (at ½ hour pass small village) to the Karun river (here 60 yards wide, deep, rocky bed, very rapid, and subject to sudden rises), crossed by ferry of reed rafts. Village, with water; no supplies. Thence there are two roads to Mal Amir, one by Gurgir, rough and stony, the other below.
9. Mal Amir, 6 farsangs, 8 hours, 2,150 feet. The road follows the course of the river farther along valley (when the river turns to the right, and is not again met till Shūstar); level, and could easily be made practicable for carriages. Pass through a narrow valley with high precipitous mountains on either side. Ascend a mountain ridge, overlooking the Mal Amir plain by an ancient paved way to 3,150 feet, then descend for 1,000 feet by a stony and difficult road to the plain. This would be impracticable for carriages. Village, with water and supplies.
10. Kala-i-Tul, 4 farsangs, 4 hours, 3,150 feet. The road is good and level, with a slight and scarcely perceptible ascent. Village with water and supplies. Thence there are two roads to Shushtar one by Gūrgir, rough and stony, the other shorter and better, by Koh Sang-y-Shoostur as below.

11 and 12. Shooshtur, 27 farsangs, 27 hours, 550 feet. The road descends gradually the whole way to Shooshtur. At first it is rough and

over a succession of rugged hillocks for 15 hours, then for 12 hours perfectly level over magnificent pasture land. Total 12 stages, 99 hours, 77 farsangs. This road is said to be always open, but this is doubtful in severe winters.

The following routes are from information obtained from natives by Mr. Mackenzie, and may be of some use to future travellers:—

STAGES.

Shoostur to Gotwand	3	farsangs.
Gotwand to Lalee	6	„
Lalee to Chulvar	6	„
Chulvar to How-i-Now	5	„
How-i-Now to Chelow	7	„
Chelow to Ooganooree	6	„
Ooganooree to Bazooft	5	„
Bazooft to Pawcherril	6	„
Pawcherril to Aloo-Kuh	6	„
Aloo-Kuh to Chulcheh	5	„
Chulcheh to Kav-i-Rokh	5	„
Kav-i-Rokh to Bist-a-goon	5	„
Bish-a-goon to Pol-i-Vargoom	6½	„
Pol-i-Vargoom to Ispahan	2½	„

This route is closed by snow, and this year, though not a severe winter, was not open early in April. A portion of the tribe take this road in May, as they move their flocks up to the highlands for summer grazing.

STAGES.

SHOOSTUR TO KIRMANSHAH.

Shoostur to Kouzek	6	farsangs
Kouzek to Dizful	5	„
Dizful to Housanieeah	7	,
Housanieeah to Pol-i-Zar	4	„
Pol-i-Zar to Bagh-i-Kahn	4	„
Bagh-i Khan to Jow-i-Dar	4	„
Jow-i-dar to Baraftar	4	„
Baraftar to Khoramabad	8	„
Khoramabad to Boorijird	10	„
Boorijird to Koom	5	stages
Koom to Tehran	4	„
Boorijird to Hamadan	3	„
Shoostur to Kirmanshah	10	„

The above route is said to be always open.

COMPARATIVE ROUTE.

Bushuhr to Ispahan via Sheeraz and Kazeroon.

Bushuhr to Ahmedie...	6	farsangs
Ahmedie to Borozgoon	5	„
Borozgoon to Dhalaki	4	„
Dhalaki to Khanehtacht	4	„
Khanehtacht to Kamaridge	3	„
Kamaridge to Kazeroon	6	„
Kazeroon to Mein Kotul	6	„
Mein Kotul to Dash-i-Argeen	3	„
Dash-i-Argeen to Khaneh Lenzan	3	„
Khaneh Lenzan to Sheeraz	8	„
Sheeraz to Lairgoon	5	„
Lairgoon to Saidoon	7	„
Saidoon to Kawamabad	4	„
Kawamabad to Moorghab	6	„
Moorghab to Dehbeed	7	„
Dehbeed to Khanekhoreh	5	„
Khanehkhoreh to Soormeh	7	„
Soormeh to Abadeh	4	„
Abadeh to Shoolgoostan	5	„
Shoolgoostan to Yezdikhast	6	„
Yezdikhast to Mavoodbeg	6	„
Mavoodbeg to Koomeeshah	4	„
Koomeeshah to Myar	5	„
Myar to Maarg	6	„
Maarg to Ispahan	3	„

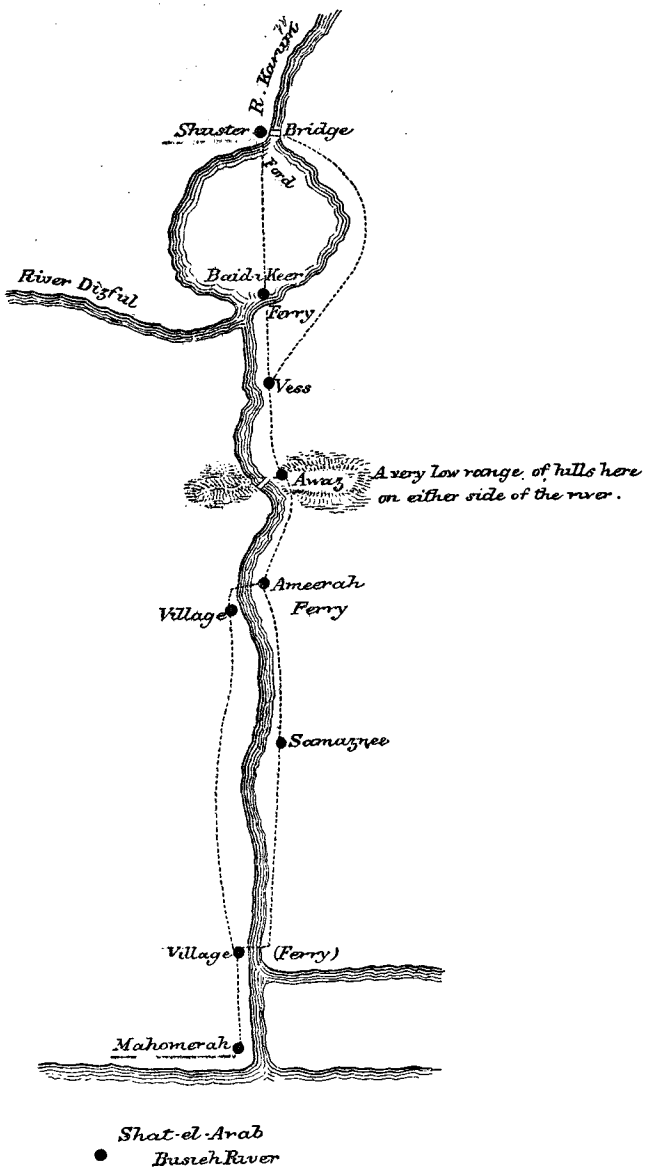
Shoostur to Mahomrah by land-caravan stages.

Shustar to Ban-i-keer				7	farsangs
Band-i-Keer to Vess	3	farsangs			
Vess to Awaz	4	„	...	7	„
Awaz to Ameerah	3	„	...		„
Ameerah to Samaznee ...	5	„	...	8	„
Samaznee to Village above Mahomrah	7	„	...		
Village to Mahomrah ...	2	„	...	9	„

The shortest way is to ford the river at Shustar, water rising to girths of the horses, and proceed direct to Band-i-Keer, where there is a ferry. Animals swim over.

At Ameerah there is a similar ferry, where a crossing can be made to the Mahomrah bank, shortening the distance by 4 farsangs, but there is

ROUGH SKETCH OF RIVER KARUM SHOWING ROADS FROM SHUSTUR TO MAHOMRAH.



no village beyond Ameerah, and if that road is taken it necessitates camping out in the open for one night.

By proceeding *viâ* Samaznee at 2 farsangs above Mahomrah (on the Mahomrah bank) is a village and ferry. Animals swim over.

But by crossing the bridge at Shustar and following the bend of the river, one crossing above Mahomrah alone is necessary, but the distance is thereby increased by one day's march.

Shoostur to Mahomrah:—Four marches as before specified. Road, a dead level, following course of the river over a fine alluvial plain, which in the dry weather presents no obstacles for carriage traffic, but after rain becomes so soft that horses alone can, in many places, with difficulty pass over it.

The Karun, however, presents no impediments to navigation, save at the Bund* of Awaz, where one transhipment alone is necessary. It is a fine and rather sluggish river throughout, having a greater depth of water above than below the Bund. The minimum depth at the shallowest part, *during the low season*, is said to be 2½ to 3 feet.

Steam vessels towing rafts, could make the ascent in 50 hours, and the descent in 20 hours.

The population from Shoostur to Mahomrah are Arabs, who have a great dislike for their Persian rulers. They possess large flocks, but grow sufficient grain for home consumption only. The crops are entirely dependent on the rainfall.

At no point did I observe the waters of the Karun utilized for purposes of irrigation.

General Remarks.

Inhabitants and Language.—The people from Gowharoo to Kali Lool are all Bakhtiarns, speaking amongst themselves "Loor," understanding Persian. Their present means of sustenance, their flocks, entails on them a nomadic life, but they seem to adapt themselves readily to a more settled life, and would doubtless adopt it had they any inducement for so doing offered them.

They proved themselves to me hospitable, civil and obliging when kindly spoken with, and to be free from caste prejudices. I was everywhere made welcome to sleep in their tents, and when food was brought they evinced no objection to eat out of the same dish with me, smoking the Kalian, too, at all times after me.

I never once met with an insult though accompanied by three private servants only, and one footman as guide, given to me at Ardall by the Eelkhanie who, though sufficient, was indispensable for my safety. Their ignorance was the profoundest, having no idea either of time or distances. Generally, they know of two other nations only—the

* Dam.

"Farangee" and the "Roose:" to the latter they would appear to give the precedence, as I was at more than one place asked whether the Emperor of Russia was not the "Shah-in-Shah."

They are a happy and contented people, entirely under the control of one chief, the "Eelkhanie," whose authority alone they acknowledge.

From leaving Ispahan, till I reached Shustar I did not meet a single beggar, and saw no sick people in their villages.

They clothe themselves in chintzes and Manchester cloths indigo dyed.

Industry and Agriculture.—They rear large flocks of goats, sheep, and cattle. Horses and mules, too, of a fine class are largely bred, and it is from these districts that muleteers generally, throughout the country, draw their supplies. The hair of the goat is used for the manufacture of their tent-cloth, and the wool, though much inferior to the Arab descriptions, partially finds its way into the hands of the Busreh and Baghdad buyers, but is chiefly consumed in the country in the manufacture of felt for capeting, hats, and overcoats.

Carpets, too, of an inferior and rough description are manufactured by their women, and all sold by weight, Krans 8 to 10 per 13lbs.

In winter they trap the fox and "Musooree" (a species of martin ?), a considerable trade being done in these skins with the buyers for the Russian market. The fox skins sell at Krans 2 each, and the "Musooree" at Krans 6 to 8 each.

Other articles of Commerce are "Roghan" (clarified butter), gall-nuts and beeswax. Coal is said to exist in their mountains, and fine naphtha springs in the plains.

Grain is extensively grown, and its cultivation could be extended to an almost unlimited amount if the country was opened up and access given to the people to the Indian and foreign markets, which the placing of steam vessels on the Karun would at once tend to do.

Barley at Shoostur was selling at 45lbs. per Kran (10d.), and wheat 26lbs. per same price.

This route once opened up to traffic must quickly supersede the one *viâ* Sheeraz. In distance it is 9 to 10 days shorter. The passes are nowhere so rough as between Bushuhr and Sheeraz, and with no great objections to it, it has the advantages of more water, more timber, and a cooler climate.

At present the bazaars of Shoostur are largely supplied with chintz and goods from Russia. Notwithstanding the long and expensive land carriage they have to bear, and that, too, notwithstanding that Shoostur might be placed within two days' communication with the Busreh river, where, having regular steam service, they might be placed weekly within reach of all the foreign markets.

The opening of the Karun to steam navigation would, I believe, not

only force back the Russian trade to its natural limits, but it would drain the most fertile provinces of this country of, if they could find an outlet, the produce they are capable of raising, thereby enriching its ryots and increasing the general wealth and prosperity of the country.

APPENDIX V.

Tubbus to Toon:—

1. Durra Beet 15½ miles. The road is level and good over gravel to Howz Dana Chol 9 miles (water), at 3 miles pass Howz-y-Cha (water), at 8 miles HowzAtar (water), at Danachol are caves; it then enters Dalian-i-chol, goes up bed of river, for 1¼ miles, when it goes up to the left bank and along this, sometimes narrow, for 1¾ miles, when it crosses to right bank and then leaves river to right, and then ascends, gradually at first but steepish at end, to Godar-Ashego in ½ mile. From this it descends easily into bed of river draining to south in 1 mile, it then goes over an undulating plateau for ½ mile to gorge Dalian Ashego, and goes up a river bed through this which is a strong position. It then ascends over undulations to 6,800 feet, and then descends into bed of Darabit river at the 15½ mile. Here a serai, good water, few supplies.
2. Deli Mahamad 16½ miles.—The road first crosses over a rise and in ½ mile descends into Darabit river, up which it goes for 1 mile, crossing over another rise and going into it again at 1¾ miles where space for camp, water. From this the road leaves the river and ascends gradually over undulations for ¾ mile, after which it goes over an undulating waste, with hills on both sides, nearly level the whole way for 10½ miles, when it winds round the range to right and then goes over gravel waste for 3½ miles. Here serai, water brackish, supplies.
3. Terez 17 miles.—The road is quite good the whole way, going through gravel valleys with hills on either side and crossing low passes at 2 miles and 9 miles, from which last it descends very gradually through open valley, at 15 miles; road to Zeinabad on right at 16 miles; road to Aspak on left, then in at 17 miles, serai, water, supplies.
4. Bashruyah 16 miles.—The road first crosses a low ridge, then the plain of Bashruyah is in front, and this it crosses for 15 miles over gravel whole way; at 7 m. pass water out from hills; at 11½ miles and 13½ miles, howz water.
5. Robat 16 miles.—The road goes through cultivation for 1½ miles, then over heavy sand for 2 miles; there is then a distance of 3 miles,

sometimes over sand, sometimes gravel, which is succeeded by sand for another 2¼ miles. The road then enters on low sandy undulating ridges, from which it ascends gradually, very heavy in places, for 3½ miles; it then descends into the sandy bed of the Senawa ravine, up which it continues for 1½ miles, when it leaves on right bank, and crossing a low ridge, and continues over ground undulating, sometimes sand, gravel or pat, for 6 miles. Here excellent serai, few supplies, good water from a howz, ½ mile off. Water at Howz Agha, 5¾; Howz Ali Pir, 8; and Howz Dohok, 11 miles.

6. Toon 21½ miles.—The road is over gravel plain for 5½ miles; it then enters low hills and ascends very gradually for 7½ miles, when it crosses a pass. It then descends generally, but crosses low spurs of the range at 17 miles and 20 miles, and it arrives over plain at 21½ miles. Water at 18 miles. Here everything procurable.

Total distance from Tubbus to Toon, 102½ miles.

APPENDIX VI.

THE MERV QUESTION.*

I now propose to offer a few remarks on the importance which should be attached to the present position and future action of Russia in Asia, especially in regard to what may be termed the Merv question. I would premise, that I do not purpose to present those who may honour me by a perusal of them, with any history of the progress of that power, because I take it for granted that they have had access to the many able works† which afford such necessary information. I wish further, in as few and as plain words as may be, to mark a distinction. Whether or no the conquest of Merv is a part of a grand scheme of conquest patiently worked out by Russian statesmen, there is at least this difference between it and preceding operations, that *they* may be defended, but *it* cannot. It may be possible to believe that the instinct of self preservation has hitherto induced Russia to keep on acquiring fresh territory in Toorkistan, in order to obtain positions of strategical and defensive importance; but I assert that now this plea must end. The Khivan desert is the limit of all advances which can be justified on the grounds of defence, and therefore it is, that any further advance comes under the category of offence; therefore it is that the Merv question differs from all that have gone before it.

We have heard much of the advantages which will accrue to humanity in Asia from the civilizing influences of the Russian power; and I think, no one, no one at least who has seen as I have, how much in need of civilization all Asia is, will refuse to endorse such sentiments, or hesitate to aid in any plan towards the attainment of such an object. But surely there is a limit to this theory, and the limit which common sense would place to it would be the point at which it might commence to create evil. In the conquest of the Khanates of Toorkistan, and in their gradual initiation in the blessings of order and justice, there is no doubt much good, and we may well wish Russia God speed in the task; but when the prosecution of further conquests, though made in the purest spirit of philanthropy, may lead to serious evils hereafter, surely it is time for philanthropic pleas to be withdrawn. Besides, let us not forget,

* This paper was written in 1875, since which time events have much changed, but I prefer to let it stand.

† Particularly those of Captain Trench, Sir H. Rawlinson, and Mr. Michell.

that if self-preservation is a Russian duty, and philanthropy in Asia a Russian mission, there is such a thing as our own preservation, and our mission of civilization in our part of Asia is not less holy or urgent.

And seeing that nations, like mortals, are fallible, it seems to me the right thing, in the interests of civilization and mutual self-preservation, is for both Russia and England to avoid striving for positions which may change friendly rivalry into hostility, and thus retard, for an indefinite period, all schemes for the amelioration of the material and spiritual condition of their subjects in Asia.

Now, these sentiments, though they may be shared in by the Czar himself and by an advanced party of his subjects, are certainly not those of a large and powerful majority of his people. There is a party who hold that it is the destiny of Russia to advance and absorb unceasingly; and it is not right, because we ourselves wish for nothing but peace and goodwill, that we should shut our eyes to the mischief which the unceasing advocacy of such opinions may effect. Neither should we forget that should the Russians once succeed in taking up such a position as would be a thorn in our sides, a sense of national honour will not permit them to withdraw, nor will the instinct of self-preservation permit us to acquiesce. I hold the occupation of Merv to be such a step. It may be a small thing, but it is like a small bit of poison put into a wound, causing it to slough, to inflame, and requiring excision lest it should mortify.

The Russians once in Merv, the sore so caused will rapidly get worse, and will extend to Herat; if suffered to remain, it will keep us in a constant state of irritation and alarm.

It will first be necessary that I should show what is the real value of Merv, and how danger must come if the Russians are permitted to obtain possession of it. We certainly read that though Merv was once one of the principal cities of Asia, it has long since disappeared, and now there is no city, town, or even village on the old site, nothing but the shell of an inferior Toorkmun fort, surrounded by a number of black tents of the Tukkehs.

What then, it may well be remarked, is the value of such a place? Why is such a fuss made about it? Surely if the Russians develop a foolish predilection for seizing empty forts in the middle of deserts, they had better be fooled to the top of their bent, they will soon find out their mistake?

The value of Merv arises from several causes which cannot be controverted and should not be ignored. In the first place, though the above, to some extent, truthfully describes what Merv is, it says nothing of what it may be. Should we not mark, as an item for consideration also, the deep, swift, steady flow of the Moorghab river through its midst? should we disregard the rich loamy soil on its banks? The site may be desolate now, but conceive this spot peopled—not by kidnapping Toorkmuns, whose agricultural operations are limited to the rearing of a

few melons and a little barley, but by an industrious race living under a strong and settled government.

Imagine this, and the further effort of replacing Merv in the mind's eye, at least, in its old place of plenty and populousness is easy.

So far, I acknowledge I have only shown why the beneficent effects of Russian rule might well be extended to Merv also. But remarking, *en passant*, that these very qualities of plenty and population are those required for a strategic base, I now turn to the other advantages of Merv.

In order that my readers may follow me clearly, I would ask them here to turn to a map of Central Asia; and note the great desert which stretches without a break between the Oxus and Persia. This desert is waterless; it has no green spot anywhere to relieve the eye; it is almost death for small parties to attempt to cross it; it is next to impossible for large bodies now to do so. It is, in fact, at the same time an unrivalled frontier if looked at from a defensive point of view, and a very formidable obstacle if regarded from an offensive aspect. It stretches like an unfordable river, only it is far more impassable than any river, along the present right front of the Russian possessions in Asia.

Now, without for a moment imputing ulterior motives to the gentlemen on the north, with regard to this obstacle, suppose it were asked of a general as a strategical exercise merely how he would cross this obstacle, what would his answer be? Practically, the problem is like the crossing of an unfordable river in the face of opposition. Any one, therefore, in the position of the supposed general, would look out for the narrowest and best point, and his eye could not fail to rest upon the spot where the green promontory of Merv juts out encouragingly towards Chajooee on the Oxus, and here he would place his bridge.

He would next try to get possession of the opposite bank, and if he could do this unawares, so much the better. And the best way to do this would be to cross at a point where he would not be noticed, and creeping up silently come down on the flank of those holding the selected point, Merv.

I will not pause here to show that this is exactly what the Russians are doing; but go on with the development of this important strategic value of Merv.—Having gained possession, it would be easy then to bestow on it the blessings of a strong government, and so enable its inhabitants to turn it from a wilderness into a garden; and it would also be quite feasible to connect it securely by means of the improvement of well selected halting places with the Oxus, thus giving it safe, direct, and easy communications with any part of the Russian Empire.

But another glance at the map will convince that Merv may thus become much more than a mere fertile oasis. Connected with its rear by communications which are unassailable, it affords a position of very patent strategical value for offensive purposes against both Mushudd and Herat, that is, it presents a salient front towards those places.

And this granted, it is not difficult to conceive perfectly reasonable and irrefragable grounds for showing how means may be collected at this point, which would render possible any offensive stroke which might afterwards be thought advisable. Of course if the Russians are in possession of Merv, they must move up such troops and stores as might be required for its maintenance, and supposing it, as I say, to be thought advisable to advance further, it is evident that all the preparations for this advance can be made in this place in absolute secrecy. My readers are well aware that but little information reaches us regarding Russian movements that they do not wish us to receive, and that what we do get is generally months old; if they add this fact to the extra difficulties which the physical dangers of the desert and the moral fear of the Toorkmuns interpose, it is clear that it would be unreasonable to expect any news of Russian doings at Merv, which the authorities for any reason wished kept secret, to be received by us till it was stale and useless.

Of course, supposing us to be anxious about Herat, rumours might reach us of men and material being collected at Merv; but the answers to any questions we asked would be so easy, that it would hardly be worth the while to ask them at all. Threatened disturbances amongst the Toorkmuns, disaffection among the Oozbecks, the ordinary relief of regiments on the frontier, would suffice to account for much larger forces than would probably be necessary.

It is thus evident that Merv may become endowed with plenty, and a depôt for offensive purposes, and if I can show that there are facilities for advance from it, I shall have shown what its full importance really is.

A Russian authority, M. Tchichacheff, declares that Herat would be in no danger, even if the Russians were in possession of Merv, because the road between these places lies over an impracticable range of mountains. I must, however, take leave to deny this statement in the most decided manner. I have myself been to the Herat valley, and have followed a considerable part of one of the roads to Merv, and I have made the most careful inquiries from people on the spot who were in the constant habit of riding over the rest of the distance. Yet, there is so little impression of difficulty in my mind, that I would undertake to drive a mail coach from Merv to Herat by this road.

With regard to the other road, by the Moorghab, we have fortunately the evidence of two British officers, Lieuts. Abbott and Shakespeare, and in their accounts, which are accessible to any one, there is no word of difficulty anywhere.

The distance being 260 miles, the fact therefore is that this place, which the *Times* says is of no importance, is easy accessible from Herat—that is, for guns, cavalry, and infantry. How soon 5,000 men could be transferred from one place to the other, I leave my readers to work out for themselves, all I contend being, that to do so would be a perfectly feasible, nay an easy, military operation.

But supposing for the sake of argument, that we shall be protected

from any such "denouement" by the absence of ulterior designs on the part of Russia. We shall not, we cannot, be protected from the results of an annexation which our ally the Amir has so clearly pointed out as probable. When a civilized power takes up a frontier close to a race of such turbulent ruffians as the Toorkmuns, the Jamsheedees, and Huzarahs, and other tribes within the Afghan border; and when that state, as I can assure my readers it is, is believed in Khorassan to have aggressive tendencies, complications must arise, raids and counter-raids will be committed; explanations and redress will be asked for, and as is characteristic of all Oriental chiefs, never fully or frankly given. *Then* satisfaction will be taken, Russian detachments will take the law into their own hands, and there will again be as much, nay, more reason for a further advance, as there has been hitherto.

It is not, however, sufficient to show the importance of Merv. I will go further, and try and show why Herat is important, because of course if Herat were not important, and there was nothing beyond Merv but desert down to the sea, I need not have troubled myself to pen these remarks. Merv has almost no more value apart from Herat, than the head of a sap has apart from a fortress selected for attack. I therefore wish particular attention to be given to the next step by which I hope to prove my case.

Herat has been termed the Key of India, not lightly as a mere figure of speech, but by every officer who has had an opportunity of seeing its valley. It is so, because it is the nearest and best point at which an invader could concentrate and prepare for the invasion of that country; advantages which it gains from its beautiful valley, the fertility of which is unrivalled in Asia; from its strategical position, which gives it the command of all the important roads to India; from the great strength of its fortress, it being in fact, the strongest place from the Caspian to the Indus; from its admirable climate, and from the prestige it enjoys throughout Asia.

The fertility of its valley, and its capability of maintaining large forces is proved by the fact that it has been besieged oftener than any city in Asia, and has always afforded supplies for the armies of both besiegers and besieged. And it must be remembered the first have sometimes reached as many as 80,000 men, and have seldom fallen below 30,000, while both have always been composed of undisciplined men who destroyed nearly as much as they consumed. Moreover, I have seen it with my own eyes, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is capable of maintaining a very large army.

It will not be necessary to describe the defences of Herat, but only to remark that Sir H. Rawlinson's description is in no way exaggerated when he says, "It is surrounded by works of the most colossal character, which with the adaptations and improvements of modern science might be rendered almost impregnable."

A glance at the map will convince any soldier of its importance

strategically. No less than five distinct routes lead to Herat from the west, viz: 1. from Ashruff by Shahrood, Toorshez, Khaf; 2. from Guz by Bostam, Subzwar, Toorbut, Haiduree, and Shuhr-i-Now, 3. from Astrabad by Findurisk, Jahjurm, Jowen, Nishapoor, Furreeman, Shuhr-i-Now; 4. by the Goorgaun, Rabat Ishk, Boojnoord, Koochaun, to Mushudd, and Jam; 5. from the mouth of the Attruk, by that river through the same points. From the north two routes lead direct on to it from Merv, and a third arrives from Kirkee by Maimanna. Herat commands all these routes, as well as the routes to the south from Persia, viz. from Toon by Khaf, from Ghaeen, Subzwar, from Bisjund to Furrah, Herat and Lash. Moreover the routes leading out of Herat, or over which an army stationed here may be said to have the command are, 1. the route to Kabul by Bameean; 2. the route to the same place by Behsood; 3. the same from Merv by Bala Moorgab; 4. the route by Bulkh to Kabul; 5 and 6. two routes to Kandahar; 7. the route to Ghuznee through the Huzarah country; 8. the routes from Persia which lead through Subzwar, Furrah, Lash or Seestan, and which all converge on Kandahar.

Besides all these positive and patent advantages which this place possesses, Russia in Herat would have an unassailable position, from which to theaten us in India, so as to force us to keep large forces always ready to meet the menace, while she would be able to cast abroad throughout India, that "seething, festering mass of disaffection," the seeds of a rebellion that would still further cripple us, she would altogether alienate from us the whole of the Afghans, and the Persian Khorassannees, and would practically control for her own purposes nearly all their military resources.

I will not follow this further. In fact I am particularly anxious to withdraw the attention of my readers from anything beyond this question of Herat.

I do not wish them to follow the example of the *Times* in a late article, and look so far ahead as the invasion of India, and thus miss, as that paper has done, the danger at our feet, which is Herat. The danger now is not the invasion of India, but the seizure by Russia of a point, now almost within her reach, which will enable her to paralyze our action in Europe, and give us an infinity of trouble in India, costing valuable lives and millions of money to rectify.

The next point for consideration is this. Whatever the Emperor of Russia may wish, whatever his diplomatists may assert, there is a party either in Russia or in Asia, perhaps in both, who are determined to push on at least at far as Herat. Whatever may be said against this view, I assert that the whole evidence afforded by the acts of the Russian officers in the Trans-Caspian district have for the last seven years at least gone to prove it.

Even if the writings of Blaramberg, Dandeville, Veniukof, Romanofski, Tchichacheff, and other Russian officials, did not clearly show that there has been an intention (long anterior to the broaching of the question by

the English Government), of taking up a frontier, to include not only Merv, but a considerable portion of Northern Khorassan, the acts of their officers within the period above stated, afford abundant testimony to the fact.

These have, in a few words, consisted of a series of arbitrary actions towards the Toorkmuns, with the view of driving them to furnish pleas for the seizure of their territory. And though since the Toorkmuns have begun to understand these tactics they have carefully abstained from meddling with the Russians, this policy does not appear to have saved them, nor, will it, I think in the future.

I will not here trouble my readers with a full account of the arbitrary acts in question, for they are graphically described in Sir Henry Rawlinson's work; but I cannot conceive how any one can peruse the account of the unjustifiable seizure of Krasnovodsk and Chikishlar, the uncalled for attack on the Ukhals, the disgraceful raid on the Gamoods by Kauffmann's Cossacks, the claims of allegiance on the Tukkehs, made under cover of the Khan of Khiva, and finally their apathetic disinclination to recover a prisoner at Merv, whom the Tukkehs are quite willing to give up, without saying to himself, they are doomed.

Possessing the land which is required, it is clear that not only will they be condemned before being tried, but their very offences will be prepared for them beforehand. I have no hesitation in saying, and having been lately on the Toorkmun frontier, I know what I am talking about, that conflicts with the Toorkmuns, especially the Tukkehs, will not take place, unless they are, so to speak, angled for. The Toorkmuns, though much feared, are quite contemptible as an enemy against the Russians, and moreover, it is not their habit to attack armed bodies, even of Persians.

Having, however, taken possession of Krasnovodsk and Chikishlar, it may be conceded that occasionally a brush with the Gamoods or Ukhals might occur, but if these cases were treated with forbearance, no serious results need follow.

In this respect the Russians might, were they so minded, learn a lesson from our management of our NW. frontier of India. Let the Russians change their present readiness to take offence, nay their eagerness to make offence with the miserable Toorkmuns, for something of the line of conduct we have followed.

I have seen how things are done on the British frontier, I have but lately heard how things are done by the Russians, and the comparison I think is in our favour. A few Cossacks round Krasnovodsk, and a little energy in their use, is the honourable, the honest solution of the Toorkmun difficulty; but I fear it will not be adopted.

The Toorkmun plea is the merest excuse. Were the Russians prepared to face the difficulty, without ulterior designs, it would die a natural death, as has the raiding of quite as dangerous ruffianism on our own frontier, and I therefore dismiss it as not requiring any further argument to refute.

There are not, however, wanting other arguments by which the further advance of the Russian frontier is sought to be justified, and it may be well to examine these. The Russians assert that it is necessary to take possession of the Toorkmun country, in order to improve their military position and render the communications between the various strategic points of their position in Asia more secure. Let us therefore consider their present position. Though these places are not at the present moment actually held by them, *Khokand*, *Bokhara* and *Khiva* may be taken to be the main advanced points of their position, and Orenburg and Astrakhan, may be said to form the natural bases for their outposts. Now the merest tyro in the military art knows, that to form a sound military position, the communications of a force should lead to the rear or base, from as near the centre of the front as possible, in order that they may be covered by the army in front. A glance at the map will show us that as far as safety from attack (the most important consideration in establishing a military line of communication) is concerned, a line which will take them from the points in italics by Tashkent, Kazala, Uralsh and Orsh to Orenburgh, or by Khiva, across the Ust Urt to the Mertir Kuli Bay to Astrakhan, would in respect of safety be perfect, and it cannot of course be upheld for one instant, that a line between these points taken through the Toorkmun country and the desert of Kara Koom, will be in any way an improvement.

But it may be advanced, that though the lines I have thus traced are the most direct, as far as mere distance goes, and the safest, they are, owing to the long land journey entailed, too tedious and expensive to admit of their being retained, and that it is necessary to gain a fresh line, on which, if not quite so safe, the difficulties and expense of transport shall be less. This is quite a reasonable view. The Volga and Caspian give the Russians water carriage from the heart of their empire to the coast of the Caspian; it should therefore be made use of to the utmost. But even in this view a glance at the map will show that the natural line of communication will lie through Khiva, and across the Ust Urt, far away from the Toorkmun country; and I may here note that this is the line actually acknowledged by Romanofski, as in every respect the most favourable.

There is one other pretext which should be noticed, viz., the necessity the Russians are under of laterally connecting their possessions in Toorkistan with those in the Caucasus, so as to make them mutually self-supporting. Even admitting this necessity, I cannot conceive how it can be urged with any force, that any of these lateral lines need go near the Toorkmun country. However advisable it may be to secure lateral communication, it is surely absolutely necessary on military grounds that these communications should be well protected from any attack from the front. Now this end can best be obtained by a line running from Petrofski to Kinderlinsk, and thence to Khiva. Everything in the shape of reinforcements and material coming by rail for the

Caucasus, must come to Vladi Kafkas in the first instance, and as the best port on the Caspian is Petrofski, from whence to Vladi Kafkas there is now an excellent military road, and will soon be a railway, it is evident there can be no advantage in sending such of these reinforcements or material as are intended for Toorkistan over the Caucasus, and then by a bad road to Bakoo, only to reach an inferior port at which to embark, a worse one at which to disembark, and a dangerous line to the final points.

These facts are, indeed, so apparent to the eye as hardly to require serious argument. A line drawn across the map from the Kara Bugaz Bay to the Oxus, may be taken to represent the danger line. As to the south of it there is danger to the communication from the Toorkmuns, and it is evident that any one of the three lines I have named above, while serving all the purposes for which communications are required is also quite safe, while any line taken to the south of it is not only completely exposed to danger, but is also more circuitous.

The next assertion is, that the taking up of a line through the Toorkmun country will improve the commercial position of Russia in Central Asia, and as this is an assertion which may be supposed to be peculiarly impressive to us as a "nation of shop-keepers," let us see how it will bear investigation.

The markets which Russia supplies in Asia, are briefly: 1. Asiatic Turkey and West Persia; 2. East Persia and West Afghanistan; 3. Toorkistan. The first of these, naturally is now and must always be supplied from Trebizond, Tiflis, or Resht, and is therefore quite unaffected by this question. The second tract is now, and always must be supplied from Astrabad, as that is the best port for the purpose, and it is connected by the best, safest, and most direct roads with the main points to be supplied, viz., Mushudd and Herat. The third tract includes the whole of the Oozbek Khanates, and a glance at the map will show that either of the lines I have traced in considering the military part of the question, are the most direct, the safest, and the cheapest that can be adopted, not only for military stores, but for merchandize. Therefore, in this case, unless we accept the theory that the commercial prospects of Russia in Central Asia are likely to be improved by their adopting unsafe, expensive, and desert routes in preference to those above-mentioned, we are forced to the conclusion that no less with the commercial than the military, the proposed advance of frontier cannot better their position. There is one other point to be considered, that is, would the advance proposed in any way improve the frontier, of which the Russians are already in possession. Happily, to the East the limit of Russian advance has been settled, so far as frontier engagements with a power who does not hesitate to tear up her treaties, can be regarded as any settlement, and up to Khojeh Salih, it has been admitted by the Russian Government that the Oxus shall form the limit of their interference. To the west of this, however, this settlement has unfortunately not been continued, and,

supposing Russia to be guiltless of any ulterior object, other than the consolidation of her present possessions in Toorkistan, we are driven to consider what would be the most expedient frontier line for her to adopt. Here again a reference to the map will show us, that from Khojeh Salih west to the Caspian, between the settlements irrigated by the Oxus on the north, and those which draw their supply of water from the mountains of Persia and Afghanistan on the south, there lies the waterless desert of the Kara Koom, forming perhaps the very best and most unassailable defensive frontier that exists in the whole world, a frontier stronger than the most formidable range of mountains, and more impassable than the broadest ocean.

I have now shown what the proposed advance of the Russian frontier would not do. I have explained that only by keeping within their present line, can their military communications remain good; only by retaining and improving the present roads, can their commercial prospects be improved; and only by keeping to the north of the deserts, can their frontier line be bettered. What then does the advance south really give them? It gives them a position of great strategical importance for the offensive, whereas, adherence to their present frontier, would infallibly end all necessity for further conquests, and would certainly admit of their turning their attention to the material improvement of their present possessions. If they once overstep it, they assume a position of menace to Persia, Afghanistan and India. The truth is, and it cannot be too often or too plainly stated, Russia in this advance has an ulterior object, an "arrière pensée," and that is, aggression. I have no hesitation in saying, that her grievances against the Toorkmuns, her pleas of the wish to improve her military and commercial position, are the merest pretexts, and pretexts insulting to the understanding of any one who has any knowledge of Central Asian Geography.

Of course it cannot be hoped that Russia will prove unsuccessful in her campaign against the Toorkmuns, for, however unfortunate might be the opening of it, she must succeed in the end. Though perhaps her progress might be slow, I do not myself entertain any doubt of her success. The Toorkmuns, though their bravery is much vaunted by themselves and the terror-stricken Persian peasants, whom they have for the last century made their prey—are really not a formidable foe to any one; to a European force they are simply contemptible. And who is there to help them? The Persians have already learnt by experience the futility of opposing the Russians single handed; the Afghans with all their turbulence and boastfulness, have little sympathy with the Toorkmuns, combined with a wholesome respect for the Russians; the Oosbeck Khans have shown themselves weak individually, and quite incapable of combination. One power only can do it, that is England, and she will not. She hitherto has, like the ostrich, hidden her head in the sands of ignorance, and refused to see the danger; or, wrapping herself up in the mantle of self-complacency, she persists in believing there is none.

Despite the warning of many of her ablest officers, despite the inexorable logic of facts, she lives on in a fool's paradise, letting her enemy carry the outer walls, and hoping without grounds for hope, that he will not assail the inner, saying almost as plainly as if put into words, to the people of Persia and Afghanistan, "You may be the rightful defenders of our outer walls, but we know ye not, we have our treasures safe in our midst, so we care not how ye may be spoiled." Here it may be asked, if I know that many abler voices than mine have been disregarded, why undertake the thankless task of reiteration? I answer, in all humility and in all loyalty, because I do not yet despair; because I think it is the duty of all never to cease the cry of warning as long as they see a danger to their country; because, even one small word of warning now, may, if attended to, save England much money, many valuable lives, and much disaster, if not dishonour, hereafter.

Therefore, taking it for granted that if we do not interfere the Russians will successfully carry out their designs upon Merv, let us now consider what will be the result of this move.

What has been once it will be allowed may be again, and we have only to look back on the history of Russian progress in Central Asia in the past, to get an exact picture of what it will be in the future. In 1864 the Emperor of Russia ordered that a new frontier line should be taken up to connect the line of the Syr Daria and that of Siberia. The order for this was explicit; the line was to be limited by the northern slopes of the Alexandrofski and Karatagh mountains, which bound the Kirghiz Steppe on the south; yet in 1874, the Russian frontier had advanced to the Oxus! Our own experience on our north-west frontier, shows how even a government which, like our own, does not wish to overstep its frontier, may find it very difficult to hold its hand. Although our frontier on the north-west of India can clearly not be improved for defensive purposes by any advance, such has been the irritation caused by the constant raids of the tribes over the border, that there is scarcely any part of it which the Government has not been urged to advance. Of course, as Herat has really capabilities of being made a strong place, it may be said that it could hold out till we could relieve it, especially as it would be garrisoned by Afghans. Now, in the first place, the Afghans are notoriously the most faithless race in Asia, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that Russian gold would not very soon create a party devoted to its interests, even if I did not know, from my visit to the valley, that a strong Russian party already exists there. Secondly, what right have we to suppose that the Afghan garrison, though stanch, would have sufficient courage to resist an assault from Russian troops? We know that General Pollock with 5,000 troops, of which only part were English, and the rest the since much run-down Poorbeea sepoy, marched through the most difficult defiles of Afghanistan, though they were defended by the Ghilzaes, by far the bravest of that race, flushed with success. Therefore, what right have we to expect that 5,000 Russians with modern

arms, and the spell of prestige on their side, backed by swarms of Toorkmuns and thousands of brave Koords, could not take from the Heratees, the most pusillanimous race in Afghanistan, their city. And once they are in possession of Herat, they would fortify it so that with 50,000 men we could not retake it, and then they would secure the direct line of communication with the Caspian, and Northern Khorassan would be absorbed.

I have thus, I hope, shown that the result of this present move of the Russians may become, to say the least of it, a most serious affair for us, if nothing is done to prevent it. I have purposely stopped at their occupation of Herat, as it is unnecessary to follow up the question further, because here we come to a point on which most Englishmen agree.

It is a very old saying, that prevention is better than cure, and there never was a case in which this is more applicable than here. I think, I hope, it is not yet too late. I trust there is yet time to prevent by diplomacy, what can only be cured by war; and when I think that prevention means peace, time to improve our position in India so as to make it unassailable from without, means opportunity so to shape our Government as to make it inexpugnable from within, and that cure means war, a war of which no man could foresee the end or the cost, surely no soldier, however ardent, could wish for the last, if the first was by any means attainable.

To prevent it now is, I admit, a most difficult question. Frightened by the disasters of forty years ago, we have persisted in turning a deaf ear to the warnings which have been given, have been lulled into a false security by the distance of our rival, and by his specious and false promises, and we have striven to believe that each cry of uneasiness from those on the watch was but the cry of wolf. And now that none can disregard the cry, now that the wolf is at the door, we wake but to find the question a hundredfold increased in difficulty. Let us not, therefore, any further blink it. Let us at last face it, as we read Englishmen used in the days of old to face questions of national danger, not merely with straightforwardness but with firmness, and with fearless courage.

Diplomatic Notes, like mustard-plasters, may be very useful in slight maladies, but this case has become chronic, and requires a bold plunge of the knife, directed by a firm hand and a clear head. Sir Henry Rawlinson has apparently accepted the Russian occupation of Merv as a *fait accompli*, and would answer it by going to Herat. I so far agree with him that I say if the Russians do get Merv, we *must* go to Herat. But, because I consider the occupation of Herat would be such a serious step, a step from which there could be no drawing back, and of which no man could tell the end, I would try rather to prevent it, to turn the stream of Russian aggression from setting in that direction, than have to erect a dam at once to stop its full flow.

Our proper course then, is at once to resolve—there is no time to wait now, for even as I write it may be too late—on a strong decided policy,

and take immediate steps to carry it out unfalteringly. Our policy hitherto has been termed "masterly inactivity," but it seems to me to deserve the adjective as little as the substantive. It has rather resembled the drifting course of a piece of wood thrown into a stream, now gliding gently on, now rushing forward, with the full force of the current to be pulled up by a rock, or turned by a twig, anon whirling round in an eddy, and then resting for a time in a quiet pool, or stuck hopelessly in the mud of the bank.

Every one in their heart now agrees that the time has come to say "No farther;" some say so openly, others would like to say so, but there is the bugbear of having to make up their mind, and they would fain drift on a little longer. How much better would it not be to tell the Russian Government, in polite but unmistakable language, that we regard her operations on the east coast of the Caspian and towards Merv, not only as a violation of the territory of our ally Persia, but as a menace to our bulwark Herat. Let it be clear that this is no idle threat by the steps we shall take simultaneously to secure our note being heeded.

There are very many reasons why Russia should heed us; now her hands in Toorkistan are pretty full, she cannot see how far the rebellion commenced in Khokand may spread, she knows that Khiva and Bokhara are at best but precarious conquests, and that Daghistan is not quite so friendly as could be desired, and she cannot think that the Toorkmuns, Afghans, Persians, and Turks, would not gladly join against her. Again the Eastern question is far from settled, and she does not number amongst her neighbours, any who would join her in a war with England. Finally, her army is still in process of organization, her finances could not stand the strain of war, and she knows well we could do her a great deal of harm without her being able at present to return the compliment.

All this will, to use an expression applied by one of her writers to us, make her "think seven times;" all this is favourable to our acting at last decidedly.

But we have seen too much lately in the contemptous manner in which our representations have been received, grounds for belief in the success of any Note which is not backed up, or rather preceded by, the evidences of a change in our policy in the East.

The fault hitherto has been not so much that our policy has been one of inaction, but that we have had no settled policy at all. This must not continue. We have till now been separated by vast stretches of desert, and it really has not mattered to us what the Russians were doing; but now this is no longer the case. Her presence, which before but loomed afar off, is now a close tangible reality.

I may be asked, why take our stand here—why not, urges that fatal sophistry which is always for putting off the evil day, let them come on, let them toil on painfully through the barren, waterless plains of Afghanistan, till wearied by long marches, wasted by hunger, harassed

by myriads of Afghans, they emerge dispirited and ripe for defeat by our fresh troops on the plains of Hindostan.

The reason simply is, because the Russians will not arrive at our frontier wearied and wasted, harassed and dispirited, but if we fold our hands still and with a smug smile of satisfaction let them come, they will arrive strong and hearty, with their supplies of all kinds up, not with myriads of Afghans (that broken reed on which we so much rely) fighting against them, but on their side, and with thousands of wild ruffians from all parts of Asia, and with the immeasurable power which prestige gives in war. She will find to meet her, a Government who has been living in a fool's paradise; English battalions wasted by watching an unhealthy frontier, Native troops dispirited by the success of the mighty phantom they are at last to face; and behind all "a seething festering mass of disaffection."

Whatever the sophistry of optimists may tell us, I as a soldier cannot be blamed for placing my reliance rather in strategy, and strategy tells me that Russia must be fought if we are to fight her, as far from India as may be, in Persia, in the Caucasus, in Afghanistan, and on the Sea.

Therefore I think now, we may be said to have arrived at a stage when we can say what we do want, and what we do not care about. We know that Russia may go on absorbing to the East as long as she likes, and as much as she can, and we are aware that she may not go further South. She cannot have Afghanistan, because that is too near to our frontier, and she might turn her turbulent subjects against us. She cannot have Persia, as, if established there, she would not only deprive us of the power of acting on her flank, but would place herself on ours. She cannot have Turkey, or at least Asia Minor, and the Bosphorus, because, again, she would be able to act on our flank.

Putting the last out of the question as, though intimately connected with the subject, we have not time to enter into it now, let us follow up our thesis. It is to our disadvantage that Russia should have Merv, because through it she may attack Herat, and through Herat, India. It is very undesirable she should remain on the east coast of the Caspian, because she gains access unquestioned to routes which lead to the same end as the first proposition; she must not advance further towards Azurbyan and from the south coast of the Caspian, because she would paralyze Persia, whom it is our interest to keep strong and on friendly terms with ourselves.

Therefore, while we always conciliate Turkey so that she shall ever remain our ally, let us strengthen Persia and make Afghanistan unassailable. Of course then it follows, that the three first main points to attend to are the cessation of Russian projects on Merv, her withdrawal from the east coast of the Caspian south of Krasnovodsk, and the immediate delineation of the north Persian frontier.

I have said that I should not expect much from one of the usual diplomatic notes. These have hitherto had too much the result observable

when one feeds a naughty child with sweetmeats, giving all the sweetness away and leaving only the stickiness on our own fingers. Considering, however, the present state of affairs, I should be inclined to hope something from a note which should embody a desire for satisfaction on the three points noted in my last paragraph, if such note was preceded—firstly, by the despatch of English officers to put the defences of Bala-Moorgab, Kohsan and Herat in order; secondly, by negotiations for the acquisition of sites at Mohumrah and Ormuz from the Persians; thirdly, by the despatch of English officers to the Persian Army, and by giving a hearty support to that country. All these measures have the advantage of being tentative, leaving our Government free to act further on. The first would show a determination that come what may the Afghan frontier must not be crossed; the second would show an intention of taking advantage of the power of acting on the flank of Russia, should she openly menace Persia; and the third would display a resolve that as far as may be, Persia shall be our friend and in a position to give as well as receive material aid. Finally, we on our parts must undertake measures for the pacification of the Toorkmuns, so as to remove this sore.

Of course we have allowed matters to go so far now, that it is probable we may not be able by these means to stay the Russians in their advance; and while confessing this, I would fain hope that as she is as yet by no means committed to any conquest of Merv, or any retention of the large slice of Persian territory she has taken on the east coast of the Caspian, that seeing clearly she has got beyond the stage of Oozbeck resistance, she will acquiesce with a good grace.

The despatch of English officers to Herat, is a measure of the feasability of which there can be no doubt, nor if they go through Persia as they easily may, and in fact should, would there be any danger. The people of the Herat province are extremely favourable to English people, and I would not anticipate, provided ordinary precautions were taken, much more danger to their lives there, than in one of our frontier stations. Once there, the chief of the party should be supplied with money to pay for the necessary fortifications, and he should have power to arrange for satisfactory garrisons. By these means the important points of Kohsan, Ghorian, Bala Moorghab and Herat, could easily be placed beyond the possibility of falling by a *coup de main;* and if good arrangements were made to prepare for the quick advance of a supporting force from India, and for procuring good intelligence from the Russian direction by means of agents at Astrabad, Mushudd, and Maimunna, the advantage of the Russians in having possession of Merv would be annulled at once, if not eventually altogether destroyed.

The acquisition of sites at Mohumrah and Ormuz, would have not only the advantage of enabling us in time of war to act on the flank of the Russians, but it would enable us in time of peace, by forming commercial depots at these places and by spending money for the improvement

of the roads, to eviscerate from Persia and Afghanistan all the trash in the shape of Russian merchandise with which these countries have now to be contented.

It has before now been remarked that the value of supporting Persia is problematical; but one has only to look at any map of Central Asia to see how fallacious such an assertion is. As has been said by one of our first strategists, "The geographical position of Persia gives her a strategical importance of the highest magnitude with reference to India." She, in fact, occupies the key to the whole position. If it were a European question, no such folly as the disregarding a country holding a position of such strategical value as Persia does, would be tolerated for a moment.

But it may be urged that Persia is dying, there is no life in her, either to oppose Russia or help us. I beg leave to contest that view. Let us not forget that threatened men live long; nor how often we have seen apparently moribund states in India successfully galvanized into life. Therefore, we need not shrink from trying the experiment on so valuable an ally as Persia would be. There is an immense deal, no doubt, in Persia that might well be rectified; but bad as she is, I consider her with her polished, intelligent and generous chiefs, her brave, enduring, unbigoted peasantry, a far more promising patient than many a native state which we have restored to health in India.

Therefore, I say, in the words of two of our best writers on the strategy of this subject, "On Persia must we fix constant attention." "Let us grapple her to us by hooks of steel, forged in the furnace of mutual self-interest."

The despatch of officers to the Persian army, is a proposal which has been made times without number, but which has always fallen to the ground, partly from ignorance of its real value, partly from our own half-heartedness.

The real value of such a step as providing the Persian army with officers, lies not only in the friendliness which it evinces, in the support it would give the Persians, but also in the fact that the *corps d'armée* thus disciplined would supply us with a very formidable nucleus of a force for operations to the north, either towards Astrabad or Tabreez. Of the value of the material in Persia, I cannot conceive any one who has seen Persian troops doubting for an instant.

I am aware that the Russians are very fond of decrying the possibility of ever making soldiers of the Persians; but I have seen Persian troops of all branches, in various parts of the country, and though their organization is quite lamentable, there is no doubt in my mind as to their capabilities. The Persian soldier is physically well-built, he is extremely hardy and enduring, and considering all things wonderfully amenable to orders. In physique, he is, in fact, superior to all but a few of the very best of our Indian regiments; he is quite as hardy and enduring, and is more amenable to orders than a Pathan. And if we

remember that the Persian Government so ill-treat their troops, that only the scum, those who can by no possibility raise enough to bribe themselves off, ever serve, there can be little doubt that troops raised by English officers would be far superior in physique and intelligence to the present army.

The greatest difficulty no doubt, would be the payment of these troops, but it is a difficulty to which we are in India far from unaccustomed, and should not, therefore, be insurmountable. The Persian Government have to disburse a certain sum for their troops now, and would not object to continue to pay this amount. As in theory the Persian troops are by no means very badly paid, it would only be necessary to raise their pay a little, say 3 tomauns or 24 rupees per annum, and to see that the full amount really reached the soldier. And if, in addition, we agreed to supply all the arms, accoutrements and uniforms necessary free, we could, no doubt command the market.

Supposing that the force thus raised consisted of 3 divisions of infantry, of 6 regiments 1,000 strong each; a division of cavalry of 6 regiments, each 600 sabres strong, and 2 batteries horse artillery; 8 batteries, field artillery and 2 siege batteries, together with sappers, we may roughly calculate the cost as follows:—

		TOMAUNS
Clothing	18,000 infantry	72,000
„	4,000 cavalry	16,000
„	2,500 artillery	10,000
„	1,000 sappers	4,000
		102,000
		or £40,000

Extra pay for 25,500 men at 3 tomauns=75,000 tomauns, or £30,000.

The sum of 4 tomauns per man may seem very small, but I think it would be ample, if the troops were clothed in the fabrics of the country, which produces everything that could be required.

The cost of arming would depend on the weapon given; but it would only be heavy the first year, after which a small sum would suffice for repairs, &c. £50,000 would be about the cost of the English officers and their assistants, so that the whole annual sum required would probably be under £150,000.

There are some objections which will be made to this scheme, and one no doubt will be the extra expense. No doubt the expense will be considerable if the compensating gain be not also taken into consideration. But when we consider, what is undoubtedly the fact, that the present strength of the Indian army is totally inadequate to the defence of such an empire as ours, and that there are very strong political objections to increasing it, it is evident that a plan which promises us such a considerable addition of strength, at such small cost, must commend

itself. £150,000 is, no doubt, a large sum to pay, but then a like increase to the native army in India, which would otherwise be necessary, would cost £700,000; therefore this objection disappears. And after all is £150,000 a large sum to pay as an insurance for an empire that brings in fifty millions revenue? But we might reasonably expect Persia to pay £40,000 of this sum.

Another point may be urged. We may, it is true, raise and train a force in Persia, but can we trust it not to act against us? This, certainly, is a danger, but it is no new one to us, for more than 100 years we have been living exposed to it in India. Whatever may be said, there is always the chance of our native troops rising against us as they did before. But if such an argument were considered final, there would be an end to all enterprise, and we might as well give up the advantages of steam because engines are liable to blow up. Surely we may trust the intelligence and vigilance of our officers to prevent any such ending; or if these troops did turn against us, we might rely on the firmness and resource of the officers to make their mutiny futile.

I say nothing here of other measures, which are of great importance, as they only indirectly affect the question at issue. But the question of a railway from the Mediterranean to Baghdad at least, is one which, while it is of real strategical value to our position in India for all times, would indirectly, yet very sensibly, influence the action of Russia in this question. A glance at the map will show what a power such a line would give us, to act offensively either from England or from India on Russia's still precarious conquest the Caucasus.

I have said the advantage of the measures which I have proposed is that they do not commit us to a war with Russia. For though that is a contingency which is not impossible, we have many more rounds to fire before we need resort to the cold steel of this question. No one can seriously question our perfect right to send officers to Herat, or to acquire trading stations for the promotion of our commerce, or to cultivate more friendly relations with Persia, and least of all can Russia. These measures, though doubtless likely to be most disagreeable to that Power, are strictly defensive, nay, even precautionary. The most rabid Anglophobist could not term them aggressive, and if the Russians do not like them, even they can be stopped, not by promises, for these we are weary of seeing broken, but by the agreement of Russia to what alone can be to us a sufficient guarantee, viz., her withdrawal from the east coast of the Caspian south of Krasnovodsk, of her cessation of operations against Merv, and her acceptance of the Persian frontier from Krasnovodsk along the Kara Koom desert, north of all the water of the Tejund and Moorghab and the extension of the Afghan frontier to Kerkee.

If the Russians really accepted these proposals, in which there is absolutely nothing that the proudest nation on the earth could object to, we too ought to fulfil our part. I have said the time for standing apart

is past, our smug complacency has brought us very near a great danger, but now let us be roused, and let us not relapse. Our interest in and support of Persia, our efforts for the demarcation of this frontier must not be spasmodic but continuous. Therefore I say we must fulfil our part. The pacification of the Toorkmuns by the Russians, is no doubt quite feasible; but it is objectionable, as placing them in an offensive position of great strategic importance against India. For this reason, we desire they should not undertake the subjugation of these people. Yet the fact remains, that these scoundrels must be reduced to order. Not only Russian convoys must be safe to come and go, but all merchants must traverse the once dreaded Dusht-y-Toorkmun with safety, and slavery must cease. The case stands thus: the Russians may not do it, the Persians and Afghans cannot, therefore we must. This is our work, and surely though it may be difficult, though much of it may be rough, it is one from which no English officer would shrink, and which I trust no Englishman would think ignoble. It would be the crowning of the efforts we have made elsewhere for the extinction of slavery, for here is still a spot in the world where it flourishes, and who could more properly undertake its extinction than Britain?

Undertake to control the Toorkmuns! I can hear echoed in tones of dismay by those who have not sufficiently studied the subject. Yes, I say it is quite feasible to turn even these scoundrels into peaceable beings. And firstly, the regeneration of the Toorkmuns has already begun. Already has Russia, by the noble act of releasing thousands of Persian slaves, and cutting their kidnappers off from the markets of Toorkistan forced them to foresee the day when they must give up all their former habits, and a Persian child may pass unquestioned through their midst. By closing the markets which made kidnapping so profitable a speculation, Russia has given the slave trade its death-blow, and we have not now to deal with the vice in its full vigour, but only to crush out its remaining sparks of life. Nature too is on our side to help us. The Toorkmuns are not like some of the tribes on our north-west frontier forced to this life in order to live. They have other ample means of livelihood, and all Mervees, Akhals, and Gamoods in the unrivalled fertility of the Moorghab valley, in the wastes along the Tejund, in the beautiful but now desolate valleys of the Attock range, and on the banks of the fertilizing Attruk and Goorgan, can find room for ten times their number to live in affluence. Besides in the manufacture of their beautiful carpets, house furniture and tent fittings, and in the fabrication of the excellent camel-hair cloths for which they are famous, and in the rearing of their unrivalled breed of horses, they have other and very lucrative means of subsistence.

Still, though all this is true, though there is no need for living the devils' life they do, we must not expect them to desist from it, unless also it is made too dangerous to continue it.

Indeed this is the case with us all. We often will not give up bad

habits, even though it be proved to be our advantage to do so, till fear of the law, or dread of public opinion can be added to the incentive supplied by self-interest. We must in fact make the Persians and Afghans on the Toorkmun frontier adopt strong measures, and see that they apply John Jacob's motto for the Sind frontier. "Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos." The first step towards this is to delineate the northern frontier of Persia and Afghanistan, that we may see clearly where the responsibility lies. I will therefore now shortly consider this subject in connection with the only three sections of the Toorkmuns about which there would be any question, viz., Gamoods, Akhals and Mervees. The Gamoods lie partly to the north of the Bulkhan range, and partly to the south, while to the east they extend as far as the Sumboor River. The former belong to the section generally known as the Khivan Gamoods, the latter to that which may be termed the Attruk Gamoods. But if once a frontier line were delineated it would matter little to what section they belonged; as clearly all to the north would belong to Russia, all to the south to Persia.

Even if it were reasonable, which it is not, it would be useless to expect the Russians to give up their establishment at Krasnovodsk or their claims to the route by the old bed of the Oxus to Khiva, and therefore it is clear that the frontier must be drawn south of these points. This is fortunately easy to accomplish, as between the Little Bulkhan—which is a continuation of the Kurendagh and Attock range—and the great Bulkhan, which belongs to another system of hills, lies a well-defined hollow, which affords a perfectly clear frontier line at this point. This should, therefore, run from a point on the coast opposite the Island of Chelehen, to the north foot of the Little Bulkhan range, thence it should continue along, about lat. 39° 15′, outside or north of the point where the Moorghab is lost in the desert, from which it should run south of all the Ursaree camps and north of those of the Kara and Alich Toorkmans, to the Oxus below Khoja Saleh.

Now this would place half the Gamoods in Persian territory, and half beyond it, but this, though apparently an objection, is really not so, as the Toorkmuns are not united by any tribal ties, and as all the ground near old debouchure of the Oxus is very barren; once the Gamoods saw that their old raiding must cease, the two natural divisions would instinctively draw away from each other, and concentrate for the sake of the water and the better soil on the Oxus and Attruck respectively.

With reference to the Akhals, the whole of their camps are situated well within the frontier line sketched above, and the peaceful habits which they would be forced to adopt, would tend to induce them to occupy and cultivate the fine valleys, of north Khorassan and draw them more and more from the Attock.

The settlement of the Merv Tukkehs I consider a different question, and I will therefore for the present, confine myself to the foregoing sections. The problem before the Persian Government is the suppression

of the lawless habits of the Attruck Gamoods and of the Akhals, and this I have no hesitation in saying that they are quite competent to do, provided only the ample means at their disposal were guided by the clear head, firm will, and unbiassed mind of an English officer.

The whole strength of these Gamoods does not consist of more than 10,000, and there can be little doubt that the Shah could, from the warlike Muzanduranees, from Astrabad, and the chiefships on the Goorjan, from friendly Gamoods and Goklans, from Shahrood, Bostam, Jahjurm, Nurdeen, raise more than sufficient forces to coerce the irreconcileable atoms which compose this people, who, though formidable to helpless travellers, are not in the least so to properly armed men, and are contemptible to a homogeneous force guided by a skilful chief, with better arms, and backed by artillery, of which the Toorkmuns have a decided dread.

The same may be said of the Akhals. The Shah, from the Koords of Kullat, Madan, Durraguz, Koochoon, and Boojnoord, the Huzaras of Isfurayeen, the inhabitants of Subzwar, and Nishapoor, could raise a force which, backed by regular regiments and batteries of artillery, would soon render all resistance on their part futile.

So that the fact is, the settlement of this part of the Toorkmun frontier is feasible, nay, almost easy, provided only we give the officers necessary, and advance such money and stores as may be required to start the expedition. The result of these measures would not be long in showing themselves if commanding military positions were selected in the Toorkmun country. If everything was done as far as possible to lead them to give in willingly, I should expect our officers in six months after commencing operations to be able to report very considerable progress.

The feasability of bringing these Gamoods and Akhals into subjection is shown by the fact that formerly they were distinctly under Persian rule, as is proved by the remains of the old Persian frontier, rightly reported by Valentine Baker to run along the outer skirt of the cultivable ground on the north of the Attock range, the whole way from Kizzil Urvat to Surrukhs, and this line might easily be re-occupied.

The Russians themselves have moreover acknowledged the perfect feasability, if proper measures were taken by the Persians, of reducing the Toorkmuns into order and making them good subjects.

The position of the Merv Tukkehs is somewhat different. They are further removed from Persian territory, their hostility to their Sheea neighbours is more pronounced; they are more powerful and more united, and besides, they do not, like the Gamoods and Akhals, occupy territory which must belong as a necessity to Persia. Merv is separated from the culturable land belonging to Persia, by a desert 100 miles in breadth, but their lands are continuous with, and inseparable from, those of the Afghans. In this, therefore, lies the solution of this difficulty; their subjugation by the Persians would be difficult, because they would resist strongly, and they hate them as Sheeas most bitterly, but their absorption

into the territory of their Soonee neighbours, to whom they have already offered allegiance, would be easy and natural. It is to be expected that a firm, yet kindly English officer, would gradually wean them from their lawless habits; but if not, they could be far more easily and effectually coerced from Herat than from Mushudd.

Therefore the rectification of the Afghan boundary which should be made in this direction, ought to be such that it would take in the whole of the culturable land watered by the Moorghab, and run south to the right bank of the Tejund opposite Surrukks, and east to the point on the Oxus, north of its present limit, Khoja Salih.

It may be said that this solution of the difficulty would commit us to too great interference and responsibility in the affairs of Persia and Afghanistan. But I would remark that, however we may strive, we cannot with any due regard to the position we have taken up in Asia, shirk our responsibility in these countries. We are losing daily, indeed, we may almost be said to have lost, our influence in Khorassan, and as surely as we continue to neglect our interests as we have hitherto done, so surely will the blight of doubt in our power spread eastwards till it eats into the hearts of our subjects in India, as it has into those of our former friends in Khorassan.

This solution may commit us to interference, but it must be remembered that by no lesser interference can we secure the desired end, that by altogether abstaining from any we force Russia to play her game to our own detriment; while even if we failed quite to suppress the Toorkmuns, we should at least have done some good, and be better off to that degree than we are now.

It will be seen that all I have written hitherto, has been directly in the interests of a peaceful solution of the difficulty now before us. I have recommended that a courteous request should be made to the Russian Government to withdraw from a position which, while it is causing uneasiness to us, is not necessary to her honour to uphold, and is quite injurious to her best interests to maintain. I have shown that as the "vox et preterea nihil" policy has failed, it will be necessary to back up this note by acts perfectly within our competence to perform, and quite compatible with the maintenance of friendly relations for us to undertake; and as it cannot be expected that all the advantages, and none of the difficulties should be ours, I have proposed that we offer to undertake part of the latter to show our determination not to shirk our share.

Now we come to the second part of the question. Of course Russia may refuse to do what we wish. In one of those masterpieces of sophistry which her mouthpiece, Prince Gortschakoff, knows so well how to pen, she may protest that nothing can be further from the minds of His Imperial Master and the Russian people, than any act of hostility or even unfriendliness against us; but the irrepressible lawlessness of the Toorkmuns places it out of their power to accede to such a step as the abandonment of a strong position for their control, and the withdrawal

from the east coast of the Caspian. Her Majesty's Government need be under no apprehension; Herat lies far beyond the zone of Russian interference, and is moreover separated from Merv by an impracticable range of snow-clad mountains. This, or such as this, may be the reply. But let us not heed its length, its protestations, but look only to the facts, and let us understand them. Such a reply would mean, in a few words, that Russia had ulterior designs beyond Merv, and meant to take advantage of every opportunity that our supineness or the force of circumstances gave her. Then let our Government be no longer inert; let them then take up the glove thus thrown defiantly in their faces, and reply, first by an act which would place beyond all doubt our determination that no absorption of the territory of our allies should take place, an act, recommended by our greatest authority, Sir H. Rawlinson, the military occupation of Herat; and secondly, by a note, still courteous, but plain. The note should be to the effect, that while unwilling to discuss the necessity of an act which had been accomplished, and most anxious still to maintain friendly relations, we could not but regard any further step towards Herat, or towards the annexation of more of Persian territory, as an open rupture of such feelings, and take such further steps as circumstances might dictate.

There is, I know, a very strong belief on the continent that England's power is a thing of the past; there are, I regret, some Englishmen who would have us act as if this were a matter for congratulation. This is not the place for us to inquire at whose door lies the decadence of England's name; suffice it if we now believe that the country we are all proud of, may still be a very formidable enemy to any one who succeeds in that lately rather difficult feat of rousing the British Lion.

And if Russia threw down the gauntlet to us in Asia, she, particularly, would find this to be the case. The numerical strength of the Russian army no doubt must appear at first sight as immense as ours must appear small. But this is not the question. Large as the Russian army is, a very considerable portion of it must always be taken up for the defence of her own frontiers, and but a small portion could ever be sent to act offensively in Asia. I think it may be doubted if Russia could keep more than 100,000 troops in the field in Central Asia, and secure her wide-spread possessions at the same time. And if it were a war about India, there is no reason why any European state should join her, while it is undoubted that she ought not to have a single ally in Asia.

There can be no question also that we could, with the resources of India and England, place in the field forces aggregating a much larger total than the above, and if I add that nothing but the most blundering diplomacy or the most culpable negligence could prevent Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Beloochistan, with all their wealth of wild warriors, from being heart and soul on our side, I think it must be allowed that as far as forces go we need fear nothing.

I will not enter into a needless comparison of the resources of England

and Russia, for no one can doubt that while we could easily bear the strain of such a war, Russia would probably break under the burden. Nor need I seek to show what incalculable damage we could do Russia at sea, while she could not return the compliment in the slightest degree.

There is one other point where she might strive to weaken us, and that is a point where it must be acknowledged we are weak. I allude to attempts to sow disaffection and create rebellion in India. But as long as we keep her from Herat, and as long as we continue our present wise policy of conciliation in India, she could not do us much harm in this respect. And let us not forget that two can play at this game. If India is to a certain extent open to the seeds of disaffection, is not Mussulman Russia one hundred times more so? Let Russia think well over this. She knows better than we can surmise, what would be the effect in Daghistan, Kheeva, Bokhara, and Khokund of a religious war, a cry from the Commander of the Faithful, or of only a few English agents jingling bags of gold near her frontier.

Thus, I submit, we have no cause to fear a war with Russia in Asia; and I firmly believe that if our politicians show they share this belief, and that if it is provoked it shall be war to the knife, they will succeed in preventing any war at all.

There is no doubt in my mind that the real danger lies in our permitting the Russians to concentrate unopposed at Merv, which is quite within *coup de main* distance of Herat; and it is in this fact, and this alone, that the value of Merv to the Russians lies. Once place Herat beyond the possibility of a *coup de main*, and I cannot imagine the astute statesmen of Russia persisting in the occupation of an isolated spot in the desert, the maintenance of which must cost a great deal.

I have also no hesitation in saying that Herat can be rendered secure from a *coup de main*. To put such a place in a defensible state, at least sufficient to enable it to withstand a siege, it is evident that the services of a few well selected British officers, knowing the people and the country, with sufficient money, the necessary amount of which Major Sanders estimates at £65,000, would be all that would be required. And as such officers are easily procurable, and money attainable, and as the road to Herat through Persia is open to them to ride over any day they please, it is clear that only the acquiescence of the Amir of Afghanistan is necessary to put this part of my plan in hand at once.

And if a sufficient number of officers were sent, there are several other points to which they might devote their energies, and which would all tend to the same end. The first would be, the selection of points on the north frontier of Afghanistan, which, if strong forts were erected, would aid indirectly in the protection of Herat. Of course, without having gone over the ground, it is impossible to say exactly where these should be, but it would probably be desirable to select a post lower down the Hurree Rood than Kohsan, to protect the road in the direction of Sur-

rukhs, and also at some point near Ak Tuppeh to command the Moorghab route. It would also be advisable to repair the defences of Kohsan and Ghorian to the north-west, and of Bala Moorghab and the Saraband pass to the north-east.

Secondly, it would be quite a feasible operation to seriously impair if not altogether to destroy, the value of Merv, by inducing the Toorkmuns to abandon that place and settle and cultivate higher up the valley in Afghan territory, thus, at least, preventing as much water as was required for their fields ever reaching beyond that point. That this can be done, I have seen in the case of the Tejund, where there is no doubt that if the Mushudd and Herat valleys were cultivated to nearly the full extent they are capable of, no water would reach to Surrukhs except in floods, and it is evident that with the want of water, the present importance of the position of Merv would be much lessened.

The occupation of Herat by a British force, to use Sir H. Rawlinson's words, "may appear to some wild and extravagant." Visions will arise of murdered envoys, imprisoned ladies, decimated legions, loss of honour, defeat, bankruptcy, ruin. And I agree with him that it is time all such nonsense should be relegated as fitting food for those who, to save some of England's money, would drag England's honour in the dust.

The occupation would doubtless be a serious matter, and I have therefore recommended the trial of other measures before proceeding to this last. But surely now that we have recovered from our fright in regard to Afghanistan, we may see something else than bogies; our visions need not be dimmed for ever by the fatal incompetence displayed at Kabul; the clouds have cleared off, and while there is much for us to be ashamed of there, can we not see Outram coolly blowing up Ghilzai forts with a regiment of Sepoys, Nott easily holding his own at Kandahar, and Pollock with 5,000 men making his own way easily wherever he listed, despite the resistance of by far the most warlike of the Afghans? And should not all this prove to us that the occupation of Herat is a perfectly feasible operation.

I must however record my dissent from any plan which goes further than a purely military occupation, and I certainly would consider any attempt to interfere in the political management of a single Afghan district as but a return to the system from which we reaped so much disaster in '42. Had our operations in Afghanistan been limited to a strictly military occupation of the main strategical points of Kandahar, Kabul, Ghuznee, Kullat, Ghilzai, and Jellalabad; and had we not flooded the whole country with young politicals burning to distinguish themselves, there can be little doubt that we should have retired from the country, if not without fighting, at least without disaster, or without leaving behind us as we did, a hatred which burns fiercely to this day. It is true, if we could secure such cool heads and clear judgments combined with tact, as are possessed by Henry Rawlinson and George Macgregor, we might perhaps hope that the disadvantages of interfering

with the Afghans would be reduced to a minimum; but we should not commit ourselves to such a step in any such delusive hope; and I distinctly say, I should regard it as a very great blunder to have anything to say to the political management of a single Afghan district. No, the occupation of Herat is a purely military precaution, and should, therefore be carried out in a purely military manner. The force intended for the occupation of the necessary points in Afghanistan should be marched from our frontier in one body, the strictest discipline being everywhere maintained, and no precaution being anywhere neglected. Each post, each town occupied, should be held on purely military considerations, and as if in an enemy's country. Depend upon it if this was done, and no attempts made to interfere with the Afghans; if everything were paid for liberally and promptly; if discipline were maintained not less with reference to the marauding of the men, than to the philandering of the officers, we should go further to make the Afghans friendly, than if every post had its political agent, every detached military officer his diplomatic adviser.

From my experience of Afghans there is not, I say, a shadow of a doubt that if you are not prepared, so to speak, to knock them down and jump on them, the less you have to do with them the better. Whatever is required from the people in the way of assistance, whether it be supplies, information, or men, can be better procured by the judicious jingling of a bag of gold, than by all the political management in the world, and it seems to me that the right persons to procure the first is the Commissary, and the second the Quarter Master General under the direction of the General.

The number and constitution of the force may safely be left to the proper military authorities to determine, and the General should not be hampered by directions which would interfere with his military judgment. In deciding on the lines of communication which should be adopted, certain considerations must receive their full weight. There are three lines open to us, one of which would start from Dera Ishmael Khan, by the Choudwan route through the country of the Kakurrs and the Zhob valley; and then through that of the Doorannees to Kandahar; the second from Dera Ghazee Khan, first through a fringe of wild Baloches, next through wilder Kakurrs, to the Pisheen valley; and the third from Jacobabad by the Bolan. Of these routes the second seems in most respects the preferable, its base lies on the Indus, navigable so far; it is within thirty-two miles, of the railway, and forty-three miles of Mooltan, whence all its military stores would be drawn. It is also the most direct. On the other hand, it is not so well known as the Bolan route, and the tribes on it are so lawless that they would probably occasion great difficulties to the communications. But as both the other routes share this defect in at least an equal degree, and are much further off railway communication, besides being longer in the aggregate, it may be allowed that the centre line is the one to adopt.

As a necessary sequence to such a step, it follows that a support must be pushed as far forward as may be, and as we have the right to occupy Quetta, and we should be less likely here to get into complications with the tribes, this place would be better suited for this purpose than any other.

This, therefore, brings my subject to an end. As yet I have proposed no measures which need provoke a war with Russia, yet it is unreasonable to suppose they would be without their effect on the Government of that country. I have said the great danger to which we are now exposed, lies in the chance of Russian troops being permitted to advance within striking distance of Herat, while we ourselves are far away, smiling complacently on the reports of those whom we have so long termed alarmists. If the measures I propose are adopted, Herat will be safe from anything but a long siege (which of course argues open war); further, if steps are taken to bring about a closer *rapprochement* with the Persian Government, to raise in that country a *corps d'armée* devoted to our interests, and finally to open out the important routes from Shoostar and Bundur Abbass, by which we can act on the flank of the Russian communications which must start from the Caspian, we shall place ourselves in the best position for conducting that war to our own advantage.

The question for Russian statesmen will then become, What is now the use of Merv to us? It now scarcely promises us the possession of Herat, while it entails on us a large present expenditure of men and money; may lead us on to further attempts, which were all very well in the belief that the English were sleeping, but which can hardly bring us advantage now. In this dilemma let them take the advice of one who wishes as little to be their enemy as the rest of his countrymen, and that is, "Retire from Merv, covered by a host of the pretty fireworks your diplomatists know so well how to let off, and absorb elsewhere."

THE END.

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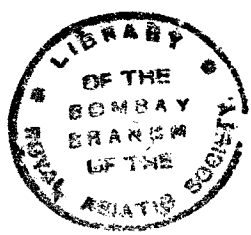

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